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# HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

MARGARET THOMAS















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*Alinari, photo.*

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## *Moses.*

*From the Statue in the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.*



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# HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

BY

MARGARET THOMAS

AUTHOR OF "TWO YEARS IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA," "A  
SCAMPER THROUGH SPAIN AND TANGIER," "DEN-  
MARK," "HOW TO JUDGE PICTURES,"  
"A PAINTER'S PASTIME,"  
ETC., ETC.

"Clay is the Life; Plaster the Death; Marble and Bronze  
the Resurrection of the work of Art."—CANOVA.



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TO

DOUGLAS SLADEN

IN MEMORY OF LONG UNFAILING FRIENDSHIP





## PREFACE

THE title of this book speaks for itself; I have only to add here that it differs from most works of the kind in being the production of an artist endeavouring to explain the technicalities of a beautiful and little understood art; for this reason it is hoped that it will not be judged from a purely literary standpoint. No attempt has been made to give a complete history of sculpture, or a perfect list of artists and their works; the treatise is concerned only with the principles which underlie all art and are the foundations of criticism.

As I have mentioned in the text, famous authors have written profound and erudite treatises on the same subject, all of which seem to lack that intimate touch which artists only can supply. An example of this is to be found in Lessing's "Laocoon"—a book quite useless to a man seeking to work out his own inspiration, for its sonorous periods and acute syllogisms would have no other effect than to confuse his

## PREFACE

mind as to the real aims of living art. There is much useful matter in the Lectures of the Academicians, but unfortunately it is so obscured by old-fashioned verbiage and rhetoric that the reader who would find it, has to dig very deeply indeed. Biographies of artists are always useful and of intense interest to those struggling along the path which their victorious feet have trod.

The present upheaval in art known as the Post-Impressionist movement, to whose blandishments a few of our foremost critics have unfortunately succumbed, seems to call for some remark, because, as in all revolutions, these eccentric artists, in the excitement of their contest against the Past, have pushed their efforts to excess, and the calm necessary to right judgement can be attained by them only after the fiery struggle is over. Dr. Theodore B. Hyslop's valuable contribution to the February number of the "Nineteenth Century," so admirably justifies and amplifies the opinion of this movement expressed in the "Addendum," that only want of space prevents me from making copious quotations from its illuminating pages.

The Past can never, to borrow Mr. Holbrook Jackson's unmelodious slang, "go pop." The labour and suffering of past ages, despite his ingratitude, have not been vain, and continued and



## PREFACE

progressive work marks the stages to perfection. The artist departs from the traditions of the past at his own deadly peril.

In conclusion I have to thank Dr. G. C. Williamson for several valuable suggestions, and my publishers, Messrs. Bell, for the interest they have shown in my work.

LYCEUM CLUB,  
*March 1911.*





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# HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

WHILE the art of painting is admired and appreciated by the whole of the civilized and even half-civilized world, her more retiring sister sculpture appears to appeal only to the few who, besides possessing a certain refined cast of mind, have given some study to her more sober fascinations. Indeed it might almost be said that it requires a special education and knowledge of form to understand her cold and classic charms, her pure impassive dignity. The man in the street who does not lift his head to look at Marochetti's great *Cœur-de-Lion* will yet spend his Saturday afternoon in the National Gallery, happily and intelligently; and among thousands of visitors who crowd round the canvases representing the drunken festivities of Dutch boors, scarcely one remarks the marble busts which adorn the vestibule.<sup>1</sup>

The reason is not far to seek; it lies in our crass

<sup>1</sup> "Why so little is known about the great art of sculpture by the general public in this country it is difficult to say."—*Dr. Georg Gronau*.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

ignorance as a nation of the human form, in the limited appeal made by sculpture to our experience, and in the difficulty found in England of studying the masterpieces of this refined art. Colour, independent of form, has a far greater attraction for the uneducated mind than the finest Greek statue; because to appreciate thoroughly or even partially the greatness of the sculptor's art, requires an education in itself. Its appeal is rather to the intellect than to the senses. "Great art requires knowledge and sympathy for its understanding."

The art of painting is adequately represented in the National Gallery, the Wallace Collection, the Tate Gallery, and other collections, but there is no gallery of sculpture in London to be compared with these together in comprehensiveness and in completeness. The dingy halls of the British Museum contain numerous masterpieces of Greek art, but for one person who seeks them there, thousands pour through the cheerful rooms in Trafalgar Square where painting is indeed nobly housed. In France, sculpture is considered worthy of no less regard than painting, and the interest evinced in it by the public is the same as that with which they regard the productions of the sister art.

The unpopularity of sculpture lies among other causes in the fact that a statue or bust would occupy more space than could be afforded in small houses and flats, and also that these works can seldom be placed in the high light necessary to show them to advantage. The modern house furnisher considers pictures as indispensable as a dining table, but works of sculpture are to him in-

## INTRODUCTORY

convenient possessions for which it is beyond his ingenuity to find appropriate places.

The coldness of our climate too, renders the whiteness of marble and the dark tint of bronze less satisfactory to the eye than the glowing warmth of pictures. Northern artists have never attained the same excellence in sculpture as they have in painting, while the races of Southern Europe have reached perfection in both arts.

There is no entirely satisfactory out-door monument in London except the *Richard Cœur-de-Lion* near the Houses of Parliament by an Italian, Marochetti. We add to these effigies year by year, but without improvement in spirit, in knowledge, in beauty.

Having now pointed out the neglect to which sculpture has been condemned among us, a proposition which cannot be controverted, and the causes, it remains to consider how, if at all, this can be remedied—no easy task! Personally, I believe that want of knowledge is the root of the evil, and that if once people could be taught to study its principles, its history, its technique, they would not be slow to take an intelligent interest in an art that is perhaps the noblest of all. Later on I shall return to this subject.

Sir Joshua Reynolds puts the question more explicitly in his "Discourses," where he tells us, "it may be said that this pleasure" (appreciation of sculpture) "is reserved only to those who have spent their whole life in the study and contemplation of this art; but the truth is, that all would feel its effects if they could divest themselves of the expectation of deception and look only for what it really is—a partial representation of Nature.



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

The only impediment of their judgement must then proceed from their being uncertain to what rank, or rather kind of excellence it aspires; and to what sort of approbation it has a right. This state of darkness is, without doubt, irksome to every mind; but, by attention to works of this kind, the knowledge of what is aimed at comes of itself, without being taught, and almost without being perceived."

If one could take the student to the base of a Greek statue, explain why this is so and so, how and wherefore it is thus and no other, point out the exquisite lines and balance of the figure, the simple appropriate folds of the drapery, the beauty of expression and composition, the purity of outline, the perfection of anatomy, and the wonderful skill of execution, the object perhaps might be achieved by the learner becoming interested, and continuing for himself investigations of other works on the same lines. He would then at least have a canon for his guidance. In default of such an opportunity I have written this book, in which I propose to give a sketch of the rise of the art, its development in different nations, its characteristics and principles, and such description of the methods of producing works in sculpture as may seem necessary to lend an interest to them. I will then, metaphorically, take my reader by the hand and lead him through a gallery of sculpture, illustrating what I have said and describing the chief attractions, and leave him where he can study Greek sculpture to nearly the best advantage—the British Museum.

Another and most serious reason for my writing this book, is to endeavour to correct the mistakes into which literary and other people often fall by

## INTRODUCTORY

explaining to them how to avoid the inaccurate use of terms in sculpture, such as, "moulded" for "cast," "cast" for "modelled," "modelled" for "moulded," etc., both in writing of the art itself, and in using such words in metaphors only. Since I began this chapter I have met with two instances which exhibit perfect ignorance of all that appertains to the art, one in a book which asserts that the walls of a certain room were "lined with the *veined* marble used by Michelangelo," which the writer adds "is only found at Serravezza"! where, in point of fact, the sculptor went to procure the purest possible marble; the other in an advertisement for the sale of "*clear cut* casts."

If any author should perchance happen to read my unpretending book, I trust it may enable him to avoid these and similar errors which, while the general public endure them, really hurt the professors of the plastic art.

## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF SURVEY

ENOUGH no doubt has been written already on the subject of antique sculpture to exhaust all available contemporary knowledge, and to leave no source unexplored whence we might reasonably expect to obtain further information. But these recondite treatises—treasuries of erudition to the scholar and the artist—have so far failed to popularize their delightful subject.

Yet who, reading a description of the athletic contests so characteristic of ancient Greece, would not desire to judge for himself of the physical development resulting from those renowned exercises of which so many types still remain in the statue-peopled halls of the Vatican? Or who, studying the invasion of the Attic States by the mighty hosts of Philip of Macedon, and learning how they were defied by the patriotism of Demosthenes, would not wish to see the portrait of the greatest of Greek orators and know what manner of man he was, who by the mere power of his eloquence could hold an army in check? Even the reader of the daily papers, learning how in that last terrible siege of Paris, the thoughts of its art-loving inhabitants turned, even amid the din of battle, to their incomparable treasure the Venus





[Luxor

GRANITE STATUE OF RAMESES II



## A BRIEF SURVEY

of Milo, and how they placed the statue in a cellar for safety till the awful contest had ceased, when it arose serene and immortal once more from the sheltering earth—would not even he like to see for himself what charms it possesses to enslave so completely the hearts of the volatile Parisians? Indeed, we shall have unprofitably studied ancient history and that glorious literature of which antique art is the only worthy illustration, if they have not aroused in us an earnest desire to behold those representations of geniuses, heroes, and divinities, which the great sculptors of Greece have enshrined in marble for us, and even the cruel hand of time has spared.

Sculpture is the oldest of the arts. Before writing was invented, prehistoric man carved rude outlines of the human figure and of animals on the bones from which he had stripped the flesh, and on the smoke-blackened walls of the cave which gave him shelter. Carvings very much resembling these are still produced by the Lapps and other undeveloped races.

The Assyrians and Egyptians practised the art of sculpture extensively, hewing their colossal gods and kings out of granite. A certain sombre magnificence, due chiefly to the enormous size of these works is their chief characteristic. The Egyptian Antinous, of which a cast may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, so nearly approaches Greek work, that it was probably produced under the influence of that school of art, and the wooden statue, *Es Shêkh el Beled*, in the museum at Cairo is as good a piece of realism as early sculpture has produced. Nevertheless Assyrian and Egyptian sculpture remained always more or less



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

archaic, relying for its effect on size, simplicity of line, and the dignity of repose.

The same remarks apply to Etruscan sculpture, but having myself found figures in an Etruscan tomb at Volterra closely resembling Greek work in feeling and execution, I was led to inquire if there was any probability of that people ever having influenced Etruscan art. Dennis gives all the information to be obtained on the subject and says: "antiquaries endeavour to reconcile conflicting facts by imagining an extensive population of Greeks settled for ages in Etruria. But after all what are the speculations of most antiquaries worth, where there are no historic records for guidance, and few other palpable data from which to arrive at the truth . . . where in a word, the question resolves itself into one of artistic feeling, as much as of archaeological erudition? Not to every man is it given to penetrate the mysteries of art . . . to distinguish the copy from the original in painting or sculpture."<sup>1</sup>

Till the epoch of Daedalus about the sixth century B.C. Greek sculpture had, broadly speaking, no existence; from then the history of this art is closely interwoven with that of Greece herself, which country carried it to the highest perfection it has ever attained.

The first statues made by the Greeks were carved in wood. These have perished but we know what they were like from contemporary stone copies. The oldest is, perhaps, the statue of Artemis found at Delos. From those rigid, shapeless figures, the progress is slow but sure to the famed sculptures of the Parthenon which were produced in the

<sup>1</sup> Dennis, "Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria," vol. i, Intro.



[British Museum

ASSYRIAN LION





## A BRIEF SURVEY

meridian of the sculptor's art. "Five centuries only saw the rise, the perfection, and the decline of Greek sculpture, from the metopes of Selinus belonging to the seventh century B.C. to the dramatic works of Rhodes, Pergamon, and Tralles, in the second century B.C."

With the wealth which poured into Rome when she became the mistress of the world, came the demand for objects of art and luxury, for representations of her ever-increasing number of gods, for portraits of her victorious emperors and generals, and of her patriots, poets, philosophers, and historians. During the long struggle for supremacy and conflicts with the hordes of barbarians who attacked her from every quarter, the arts of peace had been neglected, and the Romans, absorbed by their warlike ardour and owing perhaps to a want of aptitude, were incapable of supplying this demand. They therefore brought over artists from Greece, who however never succeeded in creating in an alien atmosphere such masterpieces as those with which they had ennobled their own more congenial land; the style of art called Graeco-Roman was the result. Many of these productions are very fine, but altogether wanting in the purity, refinement, and elegance of the old Greek art.

Rome in her turn fell before the throng of Goths and other barbarians who assailed her; with her temporal supremacy expired such artistic powers as she still possessed.

During the Middle Ages, that long period of darkness, ignorance, and turmoil which lay like a pall over Europe for many centuries, the arts of painting and sculpture were lost.

In all modern nations the first rude attempts at

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producing sculpture have a strong similitude; in early Italian, early English, early German, and early French, Gothic influence asserted itself, and the forms and compositions of the artists of each nation are hardly distinguishable one from the other. It is only in its development that the styles became differentiated according to the genius of the nation to which they belong. As infants in all countries begin with the same babblings but afterwards learn the tongues their mothers speak, so in its childhood all art expresses itself alike, differing only when it receives the impression of the age to which it belongs and when it begins to act in harmony with its environment.

The Goths developed a style of sculpture at once powerful and original, but separated by infinite degrees from the classical. Its characteristics—depths of feeling, roughness, and strength—may be studied in many a cathedral and other ecclesiastical buildings in France, Spain, and Italy, and of it the reliefs on the façade of the Cathedral at Orvieto, in that of Chartres, and the well-known *Beau Christ* at Amiens are favourable examples; our own country also furnishes us with many.

A more glorious resurrection was however at hand. The year 1383 saw the birth of Donatello and with him sculpture sprang to life again almost in perfection, like Minerva ready armed from the head of Jupiter. It is true that Niccolò Pisano had previously made the pulpit in the Baptistery at Pisa, and that Ghiberti had executed his marvellous gates for that at Florence, but rarely has such perfection been reached at almost one bound as sculpture displayed at the command of the supreme genius of Donatello.

## A BRIEF SURVEY

The greatest of all Italian sculptors, Michelangelo, flourished just after the period of Donatello. Far from following in the path traced by that profound student of nature, his fiery genius disdained all control, and he neither became a follower of that master, nor a copyist of the Greeks whose perfect works were at that time being torn in numbers from the teeming soil of Italy.<sup>1</sup> Nature was at first his master, but of her his stupendous genius soon made a slave, with the result that he has created a world of heroes and demi-gods for whose prototypes we search in vain amid the ordinary humanity which surrounds us and which we know. Michelangelo stands alone in the world of art, a supreme, gigantic figure who forces our wonder and admiration but defies us to approach or imitate. Let him who would study this divine master go to the Medici Chapel in Florence where the figures of *Giuliano* and *Lorenzo de Medici*, the one like "an eyeless basilisk" the other a victorious warrior, sit in splendid majesty above the stupendous giants which represent *Night and Day* and *Dawn and Twilight*, and say if the world holds another shrine of art and genius equal to this.

Since the days of these two artists of supreme achievement, sculpture has made no advance perhaps because it had attained the highest; rather it has retrograded.

In its long struggle through the ages, it has passed through many phases, worst of which was the pseudo-classicism of Gibson, Canova, and

<sup>1</sup> Even last year (1910) a number of statues and fragments have been discovered in making excavations for the new Rome, but none of surpassing excellence.



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

Thorvaldsen, which in its vacuity and lifelessness has yet found many imitators. A violent reaction against this style arose in France, always with the courage of her convictions, and later in England. In France, however, are found the foremost sculptors of the present day. Whether a period of perfect sculpture like the eras of Pheidias and Donatello will ever return is a question for the future, and for those who love and study the art those supreme masters made divine.

## CHAPTER III

### MODELLING IN CLAY AND PLASTER CASTING

ANYONE who has watched the panting bullocks dragging the marble down the precipitous roads of Carrara, or seen the rough blocks lying in the golden sunlight of the Marmorata in Rome, or has even looked at them casually in the cold recesses of an English stone merchant's yard, must almost involuntarily have drawn a comparison between the raw material before him and the exquisitely finished statues and groups he has seen, and have marvelled at the wonderful art which, out of the rude rock, could hew those glowing masterpieces which seem as if they only needed life to move and speak. The mechanical part of this marvellous transformation is the subject of this and the following chapter.

Pliny gives the following account of the invention of modelling. The daughter of Butades, a potter of Corinth, had a sailor lover who was about to depart on a dangerous voyage. As he bade her farewell the light of a lamp threw the shadow of his profile on the wall; she traced the outline, which her father filled in with clay and baked with his pots.

The materials used in the art of sculpture are uniformly of the simplest kind, and we will for the present suppose a bust to occupy the attention of

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

the sculptor. He takes some very finely beaten-up clay, generally of a gray colour,<sup>1</sup> and presses it firmly round a strong stick fixed on a board, adding more and more till it gradually attains the form and dimensions of a human head. The "bust-stick" he places on what is technically called a "banker," that is a high stool, the top of which turns, so that he may work at any part of his model without changing his own position. During the progress of the modelling the clay is kept moist by wrapping it in damp cloths when the artist is not at work. His tools are of the simplest, pieces of boxwood or bone fashioned in various convenient shapes and sometimes toothed, but above all his fingers and thumbs, for in artistic work the least complex tools are ever the best.

Wax is a very convenient material in which to model small objects, such as medals, coins, etc., it retains the sharpness of the artist's touch better than clay, may be left without casting, and is manipulated with greater certainty. In the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington are some wonderful anatomical studies in wax by Michelangelo, and in the Musée de Lille is a marvellously beautiful bust said to be by Raffael or Leonardo da Vinci and evidently a portrait, which shows how much may be attained in this material. The suggestive treatment of the hair is particularly happy.

There is a common error about sculpture which I should like to refute; it is that when a portrait bust is to be made a cast in plaster is taken of the subject's face, which the sculptor in some mys-

<sup>1</sup> In Italy brown clay is used, and Hiram Powers, the sculptor of the Greek slave, preferred a pink composition.



ATTRIBUTED TO RAPHAEL OR LEONARDO DA VINCI



[*Musée de Lille*]

WAX BUST



## MODELLING AND CASTING

terious way converts into the finished work. Nothing can be further from the fact. A sculptor takes a sitting exactly as a painter does; he looks at his subject, and renders what he sees in clay instead of paint. It is a most painful operation to have the cast of one's face taken, and the result is far from being satisfactory; in fact, the cast is sometimes unrecognizable, for the weight of the plaster presses against and alters the form of the yielding flesh, and, as to the involuntary expression thus recorded, disgust and fright mingled in about equal proportions give but a faint idea of it. After death casts are frequently taken, and are of great use for modelling from as they preserve the proportions of the features and the size of the bones; besides, the flesh being firmer they are truer than those taken from life.

It is said that in Chantrey's studio, a model—a black man—was once cast from head to foot, and the result was fatal. A cast of great utility is one of an *écorché* figure, taken from a man who had been hanged and before he became stiffened, placed in the attitude of the *Dying Gladiator*. This interesting object is in the schools of the Royal Academy.

Having given his work in clay the final touches, rendered the flowing freedom of the hair, modelled the drapery, and caught, if he was able, the best expression he has ever seen on his sitter's countenance, the artist entrusts the precious result of his labours to the plasterman to be cast. This is merely a mechanical process though requiring great care and experience, since the work of months or even years, is then entirely at the mercy of the workman. He takes strips of zinc or bands of clay and with



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them divides the bust in two parts, usually in a line running across the top of the head, behind the ears, and along the shoulders. The well-known property of plaster of paris to become hard, or "set" as it is called, after it has been blended with water is the basis of his operations. He mixes a basinful to the consistence his experience has taught him, and before it sets manages with his hollowed hands and a brush to cover up the back part of the bust up to the line of zinc. This soon hardens; he takes away his division, rubs a little clay-water over the edge of his mould to prevent the other half sticking, and proceeds to cover the front with plaster in a similar manner. The plaster used in making the mould is coloured in laundresses' blue, powdered light red, or anything of the kind, so that in the future operation it may be distinguished from the cast.

The mould being thus complete, the plasterman lifts the back half off, pouring water over it whenever it sticks, and then digs the clay out of the front half; the clay being thus destroyed the sculptor's work is now represented by the mould alone. This is washed very thoroughly, the two pieces tied together, and white plaster poured in it; it is turned round and round till every portion of the inner surface is covered and an empty space left only in the middle. If strengthening is required, a bar of iron, covered with shellac to prevent its rusting, is inserted. The plaster is again allowed to harden, and the delicate process of chipping off the mould with chisel and mallet commenced. Now the use of the colour in the plaster of the mould is apparent; it can easily be distinguished from the cast, and injury to the beautiful delicate surface avoided.

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The pedestal one sees under some busts is turned and affixed by the plasterman, and the completed work delivered to the artist for a few final touches if he chooses, this time with steel tools instead of wooden ones.

In taking a bust as my illustration of modelling and casting, I have chosen the easiest form possible, but the principles are the same in the most colossal groups. Of course the moulds of these huge works are in numerous pieces, and they are held together with iron. The figures in groups are cast separately and afterwards joined together. The frame or skeleton which supports the clay is of very elaborate construction, got up to scale from the artist's sketch-model; it is made of iron bars screwed firmly to a stand; lead piping, fastened with copper wire, is used where bends and joints are found.

The kind of moulding I have endeavoured to describe is called "waste-moulding," because the mould is destroyed in making one cast only. "Piece-moulding" is a more elaborate extension of the same method. Supposing a number of casts of the same work to be required, the plasterman, after thoroughly saturating the original with oil, proceeds to make a mould of it in small pieces, piece by piece, which he fits most carefully and accurately together; the whole is afterwards covered with a "case-mould," to keep the small pieces together. The mould is filled with plaster; when it sets, the case is removed, the small pieces taken off one by one, and as taken off replaced in the outer mould, the whole to be filled with plaster for another cast, a process which may be continued almost *ad infinitum*. This proceeding requires so much time

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and experience that I should advise the amateur plasterman never to attempt it; the skill necessary to accomplish successfully that which I first described may be attained easily by practice. Of course little seams of plaster find their way into the interstices of even the best fitting mould, and these may easily be cleaned off with steel tools and sandpaper, but had better never be touched. Do not buy a cast from which some unartistic hand has rubbed the marks of the seam.

Sculpture is unlike painting in this: the masterpieces of the painter are unique, and but an indifferent idea of them can be conveyed by engravings, copies, or photographs, while works of sculpture admit of very adequate reproduction by means of plaster casts; these, though they may be wanting in the glowing warmth of the marble poetically toned by the lapse of years, are yet in every other detail, absolute reproductions of the originals.

The best collection of casts from the antique in England is that in the possession of the Royal Academy, presented by Pope Pius VII to George IV and by that monarch given to the newly formed academy. Flaxman says of this collection that "it was executed with great skill and precision from the original marbles to supply their places on the pedestals of their prototypes when those originals became the prey of barbarous rapacity. The pillage was restored by the interference of British justice and the Regent's magnanimous councils. The Sovereign Pontiff, in acknowledgement, presented the casts to the Regent."

The Gallery of Casts is accessible only to members and students of the Academy, but another very fine collection is now to be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington.





[Philae]

THE DEATH OF OSIRIS



## CHAPTER IV

### CARVING IN MARBLE AND CASTING IN BRONZE

THE art of carving figures in stone is of the highest antiquity. To prove this we need not go back with the scientist to the days when primeval man outlined objects familiar to him on the walls of his cavern, and on the bones of the animal which had served him for his meals, but simply to Herodotus, who tells us "the Egyptians erected the first altars and temples to the gods, and carved the figures of animals in stone." Thence passing to Greece, the first sculptor of whom we have any knowledge is Dædalus, who scarcely comes within the range of history. Dipoenis and Scyllis, his pupils, are known to have exercised the art of sculpture 776 years B.C. Specimens of their work exist in the British Museum. The Etruscans also, before the foundation of Rome, attained considerable skill in carving, as we know from statues found in tombs, and the three colossal heads on the Porta dell' Arco, Volterra. Leaving the dim and misty regions of such remote antiquity, we find sculpture flourishing in its highest perfection in the time of Pheidias, 800 years from the date of Dædalus.

The supply of marble required for artistic purposes throughout the world is obtained almost exclusively from the quarries of Carrara. A very



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hard crystalline-looking marble is found on Mount Pentelicon in Greece, but it is so difficult to work that it is not often used now, though many of the most famous antique statues are made of it.

Carrara is a small town entirely dedicated to the interests of marble merchants and quarrymen. The houses are built of this material, streets paved with it—it lies in huge blocks on both sides of the roads, and the mountains, which rise like an amphitheatre around, are masses of the same beautiful stone. The road up these mountains to the caves is, or was when I visited Carrara, impassable by any vehicle except the rough drays drawn by bullocks used for the conveyance of the stone. The ruts caused by their wheels range from one to two feet in depth; close on each side the mountains rise almost perpendicularly, and, as if more impediments to traffic than these were wanted, huge blocks awaiting conveyance lie almost across the road, while during rain a muddy torrent rushes impetuously down the centre. The marble is blasted in caves in the sides of the mountains and rolled down into this road, causing a noise like that of perpetually recurring avalanches; it is conveyed by train or bullock-drays to Leghorn and thence shipped to its destination.

The caves belong to the Commune of Carrara and are let to those who work them. The quarries worked by the ancient Romans are at Serravezza close by, and it is said some Latin inscriptions may still be deciphered in them. It was these caves that Michelangelo reopened during that portion of his life so cruelly wasted in excavating the marble necessary for his stupendous works, and they are used again at the present day.

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The blocks are brought down the mountains in a most picturesque but inhuman manner, in heavy drays drawn by twelve or fourteen bullocks, driven by men sitting on the yokes between each pair, provided with iron-pointed sticks which they do not fail to use. The poor beasts only last for six months at this fearful labour; they are then fattened and killed, for your Italian is no connoisseur of beef.<sup>1</sup>

About 8,000 men are constantly employed at the marble quarries, and, as may easily be imagined, accidents occur every day.

It would be remarkable if Carrara had not produced sculptors, born as its inhabitants are where they hear of and see little besides marble. As a matter of fact, it has its academy which sends deserving students to Rome to study, amongst whom was the celebrated Tenerani, the pupil of Thorvaldsen.

There seems marble enough in Carrara to supply the world for centuries even were the sculptor's art better appreciated than it is at present. The women work as hard, or, as I have also seen in more refined places, harder than the men, and seem able to carry as great weights on their heads as the Eastern *atâl* carries on his back. Perhaps their lives of inordinate labour is the reason why people here look so prematurely old and are so deeply wrinkled; goitre is common. The landscape around Carrara is exceptionally lovely even for Italy.

We will suppose the sculptor to have finished the model of a bust as described in the previous

<sup>1</sup> A horse-tramway now replaces the bullock-drays on some of the roads.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

chapter and selected at his marble merchant's a block which he thinks of the right size to contain his work. It is brought to the studio and a workman proceeds to "rough it out," that is, he takes the outer measurement of the bust with his calipers and hews off from the mass of marble the superabundant stone. While doing this, he carefully examines it to see if there are any flaws, spots, etc., and often has to change the position of the head, turn the marble at every imaginable angle, or upside down, and sometimes throw away a block or two till he has found a place for the face which is absolutely flawless and spotless. This is entirely the labour of the pointer, it has nothing whatever to do with the artist, who meanwhile may be exercising his talent on other models. The "backing out" or shaping the back portion of the bust is also now proceeded with.

The model and roughly hewn block of marble are now set on two strong bankers and a number of pencil marks, half an inch to two inches apart, made on the former in certain suitable places. A perfectly level piece of wood or stone is next fixed on the front of both bankers, and to these the pointing instrument is screwed. This consists, roughly speaking, of an upright metal rod up and down which another slender-jointed rod moves in every direction; it can be fixed in any position by a screw. Having placed this instrument on the level piece of wood in front of the banker which holds the model, the pointer takes the exact position of the pencil dots; he then transfers it to the plane in front of the block of marble, having first screwed the needle firmly in the place it occupies, and proceeds to cut with his chisel or drill nearly



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down to the spot it marks. This he continues to do over the whole surface of the marble, removing the instrument alternately from the model to the block, and from the block to the model, till at last a rough likeness of the bust appears. The pointing instrument is not much used in Italy, but the same result obtained by means of compasses.

The block of marble thus prepared is delivered over to the carver, who, with the model in front of him, aided by compasses and working from pencil mark to pencil mark, does his best to make an exact representation of the master's model. For this purpose, files and rasps, as well as chisels are used. This part of the work is anxiously supervised by the artist, who himself takes the tools at this stage, and renders the minuter shades of expression and forms of features. This then "is the resurrection of the work of art," which lived a little while in the ductile clay, died in the hard and chalky whiteness of the plaster, but in soft-toned marble arises into immortality,

It is commonly known that Michelangelo alone disdained to avail himself of mechanical aid and hewed his conceptions at once in marble which seemed plastic beneath his chisel. As it is well put in Professor Rossini's somewhat tedious but historically accurate story "*Luisa Strozzi*," the great artist's statue of *Lorenzo de Medici* "e creato nel marmo e non nel modello." But Michelangelo lived "when the days were longer, (for time like money, is measured by our needs), when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clocks ticked slowly in the winter evening." Besides, to the tremendous genius of this demi-

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god of art was happily united and unusually prolonged existence; to none other have similar gifts been granted in such overwhelming profusion. Woe to the student who at the commencement of his career takes Michelangelo for his guide and example, for that supreme artist stands alone on the pedestal to which his superhuman genius and profound study have raised him; to none is it granted to reach the same elevation. Nature is the Alpha and Omega of the student of art; like a kind mother, she gives of her best to those who humbly, simply, and devoutly love and study her. Style, which Flaxman, and there is no greater name in the sparse literature of sculpture than his, defines as "art conducted by science and ennobled by philosophy," may be super-added when the power of exactly copying nature has been attained.

If the art of carving in stone is of ancient origin, that of casting in metal can also claim great antiquity, for it was practised in the pre-historic period called the "Age of Bronze," which immediately succeeded the "Age of Stone"—eras to which it is impossible to assign even an approximate date. The relics of the "Age of Bronze" are of comparatively recent discovery, most having been found in the deposits in the lacustrine villages of Switzerland and Savoy; and then, as now, bronze was an alloy of copper and tin, mixed in some specimens with a little lead.<sup>1</sup>

Assyrian bronzes, which are very beautiful examples of the art, were produced, scholars assure

<sup>1</sup> The proportion now used is generally ninety-one of copper to nine of tin.

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us, as far back as the twenty-fourth century B.C. Small bronze figures made by the Egyptians and as old or older than the Pyramids, may be seen in the British Museum. Indeed the art of casting figures in bronze was probably introduced into Greece from Egypt, though Pausanias says the first to cast statues in molten bronze were the Samians, Rhoecus the son of Phileas, and Theodorus the son of Telecles. However this may be, the Greeks certainly received the art of sculpture from the Egyptians.

A bronze bust of a lady has been found in the Polledrara tomb near Vulci in Etruria. "The antiquity of this bust is proved, not only by its style, but by its workmanship; not being cast, but formed of thin plates of bronze, hammered into shape, and finished with the chisel—the earliest mode of Etruscan toreutics. The first works of the Greeks were probably so formed, for we know that the most ancient statue in bronze—that of Jupiter in the Acropolis of Sparta—was wrought in separate pieces, nailed together (Pausan., iii, 17), and so, on the revival of the arts in the fourteenth century of our era, says Moncali, the earliest statues in this material, as that of Boniface VIII in Bologna, erected in 1301, were formed of plates."<sup>1</sup>

One of the first references to metal-working is to be found in the Old Testament, where we are told Tubal Cain was an "artificer in brass and iron." The golden calf of Aaron was cast from the women's ear-rings; and the description of Solomon's Temple and its accessories indicates

<sup>1</sup> Dennis, "Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria," vol. i, chap. xxi.



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that considerable skill in the working of metals must have been attained by the Israelites at that period. The Greeks were also acquainted with the art as now practised; there may be seen in the Vatican a portion of a bronze horse in which the core still remains, and other evidences of their method. The best collection of bronzes of the same and a later date, is in the Museo Reale at Naples. When Greek artists followed the rising fortunes of the Romans to their great capital, they took the art of casting in bronze with them; and Pliny tells us of a colossal statue of Nero there 110 feet in height.

With the fall of the Roman power came the total eclipse of art, and the next interesting mention of bronze casting is found in the "Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini" written by himself. Ghiberti had previously cast the grand doors of the Baptistery in Florence by a process known as "en creux perdue," and in this manner Cellini proceeded to cast his group of *Perseus*. His amusing account of his severe illness at the time of the casting, how at a most critical moment metal and fuel ran short, and how he leaped from his bed to throw his tables and chairs into the waning fire—is well known. He appears to have been as usual so well satisfied with his work that it rather pains me to add, what on close examination I have found to be the case—that the surface is not all that would be desired by a sculptor of to-day.

Michelangelo made only one bronze statue, that of Pope Julius II. It was ten feet in height, and was destroyed by the inhabitants of Bologna in a fit of popular indignation against that Pontiff—an irreparable loss to art. The fragments were

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sent to the Duke of Ferrara who cast pieces of ordnance with them.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Saville Lumley in his most valuable report to the Houses of Parliament on "Bronze casting in Belgium," thus describes the manner known as casting "en cire perdue" in which the great works of the Middle Ages were produced.

"The artist who intended producing a work in bronze, began by making a model of it in clay; this was baked and served as the core, which was then covered with wax, and the work was completed by the artist in that material. The wax itself was then covered with repeated layers of prepared earth to form a mould, and the whole mass was then fired in a furnace, when the wax melted and in melting left between the mould and the core a space of the required thickness of the bronze, and into this space the molten metal was run. It is to be remarked that each bronze statue of that period was unique, since the model itself as well as the mould were broken up in casting, consequently enhancing the value of every work of art thus produced."

This process is still much practised in Belgium.

The method of casting in bronze, as at present practised in England, has been fully described by the late Henry Weekes, R.A., at one time Professor of Sculpture to the Royal Academy, in his prize treatise on the Fine Arts Section of the Exhibition of 1851. I transcribe his description almost at length, for reasons which Professor Weekes himself explains.

"Bronze-casting is a distinct process in the fine arts, little understood by artists themselves, and

<sup>1</sup> R. Duppa, "Life of Michael Angelo."

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requiring, moreover, considerable accommodation in the way of premises, furnaces, apparatus, etc. For these reasons it is frequently entrusted to regular trade-founders.

“Moulding for bronzes requires frequently that the plaster model should be cut into parts; it rarely happens in fact, that a statue or group can be cast in one piece, owing to difficulties that arise, first from the moulding itself, and secondly from the running of the metal into the mould. In moulding these pieces, two or three points require special care and attention; and by attending to these we shall at once enable the reader, aided by what has been already said, to understand the whole business. One of them is the necessity of fully providing for the free entrance of the liquid metal into the mould, as well as for the easy and perfect escape of the air out of it as it becomes displaced by the metal. For this reason channels have to be made in the joints of the mould, down which the metal is first made to run, whence, entering the vacancy left to form the cast at the lowest point, it rises upwards through all the parts, and the air can thus easily escape through other channels cut for that purpose. It should be mentioned here, that there must always be provided an inner mould, or core as it is termed, to regulate the thickness of the metal. This is managed by laying, on the surface of the outer mould, clay of the required thickness, and then filling up the interior with the same material as the mould itself; after which the outer mould is removed, and the clay taken away, leaving the necessary vacancy for the metal between the two when they are put together again. A mixture in equal pro-



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portions of plaster of Paris and brick-dust best serves all the purposes of the mould. When complete it is bound round with iron hoops and put into an oven to dry for five or six weeks. At the end of this time the mould is lowered into a pit, and tightly embedded in sand, channels are made of sand, from the orifice of the furnace to the mouth of the mould; the furnace is *tapped*, and the liquid flame rushes out through the roads so formed for it. This is the anxious moment, upon which the result of many weeks' work depends. If the metal run quietly down the mould, and appear again up the passages formed for the escape of the air, it is but reasonable to infer that it has travelled through every part, and that a good cast will be the result; but if by chance a beautiful *jet de feu* takes place, it may be as well to retire to a respectful distance, and the moulder may recommence his work; for waiting till to-morrow when the mould and the cast are to be dug out of the pit, will be scarcely worth while.

"The last proceeding is to join together the various parts so cast. Chasing—in fact all tool-work on the metal—tends to destroy freedom of manipulation, and to produce in its stead a stiff, mechanical style, the reverse of all semblance to flexibility."

## CHAPTER V

SENTIMENT, STYLE, SIMPLICITY, BEAUTY, PROPORTION,  
ORIGINALITY, ETC.

HAVING now slightly traced the evolution of sculpture and its mechanical production, I approach my subject on a much higher plane and proceed to study its aim, such rules as control it, and the science necessary to produce and understand it.

Old writers, such as Flaxman and Sir Joshua Reynolds, give a number of rules and precepts as to composition, style, etc.; but the former at the end of one of his formal discourses casts aside academical restraint, and adds "every painter and sculptor feels the conviction that a considerable portion of science is requisite to the production of liberal art; but he will be equally convinced that whatever is produced from principles and rules only, added to the most exquisite manual labour, is no more than a mechanical work. Sentiment is the life and soul of fine art; without it, it is all a dead letter."

Sentiment then is the first thing to look for in a work of art. This subtle quality is not to be expressed in words; if it be there it must also be reflected on the work from the mind of the beholder himself. What he brings to it that will he find. Sentiment is entirely apart from technique. We are all fascinated by the little Tanagra figures

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now happily so well known among us. Yet their charm is not due to perfect execution or skilled modelling, indeed, many of them are very rough indeed, but to the sentiment with which the artists have endowed them. But the sentiment or impression intended by the artist being understood,<sup>1</sup> the student is then perfectly justified in using his powers of criticism as to whether the knowledge of anatomy, manual skill, and ability in modelling on the part of the sculptor, were commensurate to the sentiment he conceived. Here the function of educated criticism and the application of scientific rules commence.

Yet mature art may fail to express sentiment, and great feeling, an artistic term for the same thing, may be found in the sketch of the tyro; wherever it exists, it is valuable and incommunicable. In the greatest work we demand exquisite sentiment united to perfect execution.

After the description of the different processes by which works of sculpture are produced, and of their capacity for attaining to the noblest representation of the human figure, the most perfect, beautiful, and complicated form in existence, it follows that the art should be employed only on objects worthy of its powers. Caricatures may be safely left to the pen and pencil, and landscapes with their fleeting effects to the brush; they are unworthy of the eternity of marble, and the immortality of bronze.

This criticism applies forcibly to the beflounced and bewigged figures in the Campi Santi of Italy,

<sup>1</sup> "If you make a picture or a statue, it sets the beholder in that state of mind you had when you made it."—EMERSON'S *Essays*.



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notably that at Genoa, which, however, we may regard them as pious tributes to the beloved dead, are yet but records of ugly passing fashions, worthy only of note in a woman's paper.

Among these marble horrors may be seen widows weeping for their husbands in realistic dress, with tears of polished stone streaming from their eyes. Mr. D. W. Stevenson tells us that an admiring friend, in an ecstasy of admiration, asked him if the tears were not natural. "Not quite," replied the artist, "or they would have dropped off." "When you go to Italy," said a travelled friend to me, "go to the cemetery at Genoa, it is the finest thing in the country." Possessing no merit but the manipulative, these grotesque works have many admirers, and will continue to have until the art of sculpture is better understood.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most curious spectacles in Italy is the cemetery at Milan. On entering you are struck by what seems a number of figures on the ground in every possible attitude of lamentation; on examination they prove to be bronze monuments, a very madness of bronze. Many are extremely costly, and not wanting in cleverness of manipulation.

Style again is a subject which it is almost impossible to define in words, but a conception of what it consists in is inherent in every true artist.

Every one understands what is meant when we say "the style of the Pre-Raphaelites," "of Michelangelo," "of the Dutch Masters," but the meaning becomes more difficult when it is said, "there is no style in this work," "there is style in that."

<sup>1</sup> "The essential goodness and badness of art are independent of epochs, fashions, opinions, or revolutions."—*Sesame and Lilies*.

## SENTIMENT AND STYLE

Flaxman, in his old-fashioned way, calls style "art conducted by science and ennobled by philosophy." Sir Joshua Reynolds tells us "there are excellences in art beyond what is generally called the imitation of nature." It is precisely these excellences which constitute style. Any work that is poor, mean, imperfect, has no style.

Style is perhaps a certain noble way of rendering nature, of knowing what to select and what to omit, of working broadly, largely, with skill and knowledge. It is more important in sculpture than in painting. Michelangelo was a master of style.

The style of a work of art consists not in *what* it represents, but on *how* the subject is represented. To artists who naturally love technique, style appeals quite as much as sentiment. To quote modern examples, busts by Chantrey, Weekes, and Behnes are distinguished by this quality, but in Gibson's and Woolner's work it is entirely absent.<sup>1</sup>

If it is true, as I have written in a former book,<sup>2</sup> that simplicity is one of the first qualities of painting, it is doubly true of sculpture; limited as this art is in means of expression, it must trust to simplicity for its impressiveness. The ancient Greeks considered simplicity as a characteristic of perfection. Simplicity is the greatest charm in Gothic art, and in the pictures of the Primitives. So highly did Michelangelo esteem this quality in all art that he said, "the nearer painting is to sculp-

<sup>1</sup> A quotation from Northcote may help to illustrate this difficult subject. Comparing Reynolds with Lawrence he said, "Lawrence's heads want roundness as well, for the back part of the head is almost as near as the nose; they seem done too much by piece meal, there's no greatness of style in them."—NORTHCOTE'S *Conversations*.

<sup>2</sup> "How to Judge Pictures."

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ture the better it is, and the nearer sculpture is to painting, the worse."

Simplicity should be a far more marked characteristic of sculpture than of painting. Sir Joshua Reynolds' opinion here is of great value: "Sculpture is an art of much more simplicity and uniformity than painting." And in another place he remarks, "the uniformity and simplicity of the materials on which the sculptor labours, prescribe bounds to his art, and teach him to confine himself to a proportionable simplicity of design." Simplicity is the watchword of sculpture.

It also consists in leaving out all ornament unnecessary to the expression of the artist's sentiment, and in a broad and simple rendering of his subject, both in the whole and in the details. Breadth and simplicity are nearly allied. We have only to compare the works of Bernini with those of the Greeks to be convinced, if we have taste, of the profound truth of the great academician's remarks. Necklaces of polished marble, flying draperies, carefully carved lace, gilt ear-rings, and a hundred other vices of the modern Italian school, are thus condemned as at once inartistic and false to the canons of sculpture as practised by the Greeks and formulated by the greatest masters.<sup>1</sup> The philosopher, Nietzsche, hit upon a profound artistic truth when he said, "Artists should not see things

<sup>1</sup> Spielmann supports this opinion. "What can be said of the tricks of that section of the modern Italian school, and their frivolous followers abroad, who revel in 'The Veiled Face,' or the laborious imitation of Brussels lace on a child's frock, that draw spectators like bees around the sculpture stalls at the exhibitions, or secure them as victims at the open sale rooms, so called, in the City of London."—*British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-Day*.



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as they are, they should see them simpler, fuller, stronger."

On beauty, I have already written in my little book on painting, and what I have there said applies equally well to sculpture.

"Beauty is the true aim of art." A recent critic<sup>1</sup> justly remarks: "the quality fundamentally necessary to a picture is that whatever message it has to bear, it shall carry it pictorially. The sight of beauty is itself enough for a painter to behold and to transmit!"

"The Ideal of Beauty is Simplicity and Repose," said Goethe with the most profound truth.

"Art must be lovely, a delight to the eye," remarks one of beauty's most famous devotees, Lord Leighton.

D'Annunzio says he has found "*una pura verità*," when he formulates the idea, "*Quando la Bellezza si mostra, tutte le essenze della vita convergono in lei come in un centro; ed ella ha quindi per tributario l'intero Universo.*"

How is it possible to define that most adorable gift? It may roughly be described as perfection of form, of colour, and of expression, the most perfect soul in the most perfect body.

Unfortunately, the sense of beauty innate in the true artist is often beyond his skill to render, to materialize as it were, for the study of art gives him the power of seeing far more and deeper than other men.

This opinion is confirmed by the art critic who wrote under the name of Leader Scott. "The perpetuation of ugliness, in any form," she said, "is ruin to the high mission of art; how much

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Martin Conway.

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more if transient forms of ugliness, such as grins, sneers, crying and screaming faces, are rendered eternal in marble as the Italians are fond of doing?"<sup>1</sup>

The nobility of Greek and Italian art is, as I have remarked elsewhere, due in great part to the high type of the models the artists were able to procure. Their eyes, accustomed to this type, could tolerate nothing mean or inferior, and they subconsciously transferred it to their canvases and their marbles. Where the popular type is insistently low, sculpture is much less noble and inspiring. The *Hermes* of Praxiteles, the *Moses* of Michelangelo, the *Christ* of Donatello, are sublimized Greek and Italian types.

It now becomes apparent that we must look for sentiment, style, simplicity and beauty in the perfect statue, and we have a slight clue to a proper understanding of works of sculpture. Its other qualities are not so easily appreciated and belong to the realm of science, such as anatomy, balance, proportion, etc.; and it would only weary the lay reader to enter into a detailed description of them. A few suggestions may, however, be offered for consideration.

"Composition in the arts of design is the grouping of figures in succession or action."

In the composition of a figure or group, right angles are disagreeable. Thus the sculptor of the *Apollo Belvedere*, forced by the action of his figure to place the left arm at that angle from the body, has disguised the unpleasant form by covering it with a piece of drapery. "If," says Fuseli, "a composition does not contain all that distinguishes

<sup>1</sup> "Sculpture, Renaissance and Modern."



*(Vatican, Rome)*

DRAPED FIGURE





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it from other subjects, if it leave out aught that is characteristic and exclusively its own, and admit what is superfluous or commonplace . . . it is no longer composition, it is grouping only, an ostentatious or useless scaffolding about an edifice without a base." This sentence, I think, contains all that need be said on a subject which every artist will treat as his own taste dictates.

The balance of a figure is another point to be noticed. An imaginary line from the gullet should touch the inner ankle of the standing foot when a man is upright. "Motion is the change of position, caused by inequality of parts about the centre of gravity."

Drapery forms an important part of the study of the sculptor, and simplicity should be its characteristic. Drapery which does not follow the lines of the form but destroys it, like modern trousers, is ugly; it should express form, gathering into groups of folds at the joints and lying closely over the broad planes of the body. Fine materials may be expressed in marble or bronze; they fall into many little folds, thus giving variety from the heavier and larger folds of thick drapery.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of hair in sculpture is difficult

<sup>1</sup> "All noble draperies, either in painting or sculpture (colour and texture being at present out of our consideration) have, so far as they are anything more than necessities, one of two great functions; they are the exponents of motion and of gravitation. They are the most valuable means of expressing past as well as present motion in the figure, and they are almost the only means of indicating to the eye the force of gravity which resists such motion. The Greeks used drapery in sculpture for the most part as an ugly necessity, but availed themselves of it gladly in all representation of action, exaggerating the arrangements of it which express lightness in the material and follow gesture in the person."—RUSKIN.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

and varied. The Greeks represented it in little mechanical curls and knots and our pseudo-classic sculptors down to Chantrey, followed their example. Donatello and his followers, however, introduced another style and succeeded in rendering the softness and natural manner of growth of hair; in this many modern sculptors have also been successful.

One of the tests of modelling is the ear. If this organ be really well modelled, correctly placed, and its character preserved, there will rarely be anything very much amiss with the execution of the remainder of the figure.

In ancient Egypt sculptors worked according to invariable rules, and the son always succeeded the father in the same employment. Genius had no opportunity of asserting itself and was superseded by mechanism, hence the monotony both in conception and execution of Egyptian art. This is an example of the abuse of rules; their use may be found in the sculpture of the Greeks, the best of which was produced according to their national and inviolable canons of art. Polycletus of Sicyon made a statue called *Doryphorus* or the *Spear-bearer*, now in the Naples Museum, from which sculptors deduced the rules of art. It is an accepted tradition that Vitruvius has given us a correct version of the canon of this sculptor. "Nature has so composed the human body that the face from the chin to the top of the forehead and the roots of the hair should be a tenth part; also the the palm of the hand from the wrist joint to the tip of the middle finger; the head from the chin to the highest point, an eighth; from the top of the chest to the roots of the hair, a sixth."

Notwithstanding the ideal of Polycletus, I have



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never measured a model whose proportions were more than seven heads and three-quarters.

However, Michelangelo said in reference to these rules of proportion, that the sculptor should have his "compasses in his eye," and M. Charles Blanc remarks with profound truth that "sculptors and painters especially dread the rule of geometry. They regard rules as a fetter upon the liberty of their invention, but without dreaming that this great man, Michelangelo, before he expressed himself thus, had for so long a time had the compasses in his hand."

The correct proportion of the figure is seven and a half heads, seldom, however, found in modern nature. From the os pubis to the top of the head is one half, from the same point to the sole of the foot another half. The breadth of the shoulders is two heads, across the hips a head and a half. The shoulders and loins should be narrower and the hips wider in the female than in the male. The hand is equal in length to the face from the chin to the roots of the hair. The foot is a head and a third of a nose long. The head has four equal divisions, from the chin to the base of the nose, thence to the eyebrow, from the eyebrow to the hair, and from the roots of the hair to the top of the skull.

These rules are the commonplaces of the art-student but are not always well known to the lay observer, and are given here to assist him in understanding sculpture.

Anatomical details should never be too strongly insisted on, yet every bone, muscle, and tendon must be in their places when looked for. As Northcote, whose witty conversations James

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Ward has so wisely preserved, well remarked: "Anatomy is very well in its place, and very proper certainly, as a man cannot understand too well that which he has to represent, but it is only one thing amongst many, and not by any means the first. . . . Besides, those who think so much about anatomy are apt to be too fond of displaying their knowledge, and often, indeed, represent their figures as if going about without their skins, which is very disgusting to me."<sup>1</sup>

Originality is one of the attributes of genius. "Original work," says Ruskin, "is on the whole the cheapest and the best worth having."<sup>2</sup>

On this subject Northcote, whose forcible and illuminating expressions I always use in preference to my own when he confirms my opinion, says:

"An artist brought me a book of prints after Thorvaldsen, the Danish sculptor, the other day, and he thought they would delight me, whereas I could scarcely bear to look at them. They are exactly the Venuses and Herculesees we are so harassed with in the antique, and without one original idea in them. If we want such things we can go to a better shop—we can go to the antique itself! Now, Bernini and Fiammingo had immense originality, whatever their merits might have been in other respects, and it is this quality that has done so much for our own sculptor, Chantrey."

Repose is essential in a good work of sculpture. To quote Ruskin whose words apply more nearly to sculpture than to painting. "I say fearlessly

<sup>1</sup> "Conversations of James Northcote, R.A., with James Ward."

<sup>2</sup> "The Political Economy of Art."



[Athens

TOMB OF HEGESO PROXENO





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respecting repose that a work of art is great in proportion to the appearance of it." <sup>1</sup>

It would take long practice and much profound observation to judge the merits of the modelling, carving, and casting of a work of sculpture. One thing may be said, however, that in work taking so much time to perform, the finish should be exactly right, neither smooth nor polished like the modern Italian, nor left rough and half immured in the block like some modern French figures and busts.

A sketch in clay is agreeable, a sketch in marble a mistake. Marble is too severe a material for sketching in—it requires the long labour of love necessary to carry it to perfection, so that it may endure for ever. A minor consideration is that all roughnesses in marble collect dust and dirt, and betray the intention of the artist as to light and shade. That Michelangelo left some of his works unfinished is no rule for us; harassed as he was with continual labour and worry, it is scarcely to be wondered that the mighty master sometimes threw his chisel aside as soon as his conception was expressed and turned to other subjects which attracted his genius or as the reigning Pope gave command. Whether his unfinished figures would have gained or lost, had he completed them himself, is an unanswerable question; however, in grandeur and mystery they leave nothing to be desired as they are, and Michelangelo was

*"più che mortal, divino."*

I hope I do not appear to dogmatize; dogma would destroy art as it has destroyed religion. Rules are not made for genius, and every artist

<sup>1</sup> "Modern Painters."

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must do as his inner consciousness dictates. Besides, a natural aptitude for art, a keen appreciation of things of beauty and of the aims of the artist, the feeling which is innate in the artistic temperament to impart or explain which is impossible, render formulae superfluous.<sup>1</sup> Yet I believe there are many who, without these gifts, love art; this love properly directed might lead perhaps to knowledge, and the consequent rejection of meretricious and encouragement of good work which would be the most decided gain to art itself. I write simply as an artist, but have reinforced my own opinions by the study of the works of such authors as have treated this subject, among which, and not the least, are the discourses of the Academicians, Reynolds, Flaxman, Northcote, Fuseli, Barry, Opie, and the German critic Lessing's "Laocoon."

<sup>1</sup> "An artist is a being whose power of imagination is better developed than that of ordinary mortals, a being more susceptible than others to impressions, more sensuous, more passionate; a being who in the kingdom of happiness and the joys of life knows everything and strives for everything with the force of utmost intensity. This is an artist. He must possess a three-fold strength of character and will-power to withstand temptation and conquer it. But as there is little reason why a flower more beautiful than the rest should therefore possess a larger power of resistance against the storm, there is just as little reason why an artist should be of stronger character than an ordinary man. On the contrary, it is easy to explain why he often has less character, for his vital strength is exhausted in the double fight in the world of art, and in the every-day world. Art gives him a repugnance to dust and the gutter, but every day life robs him of the power to rise and fly. Hence this discordant fight between the inner and outer lives. The world that demands more from the artist than from others and condemns him, may be right, but Christ will be just when he saves him."—SIENKIEWICZ.



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I do not think we can fairly expect the art-student or the amateur to read these tedious old-fashioned books. The former, in the full burst of his artistic enthusiasm burning to use his tools and create, has neither leisure nor inclination to do so; the latter might easily become bewildered by the variety and abstruseness of the opinions he would there find discussed.

One of the few authors who have occupied themselves with English sculpture, Mr. Marion H. Spielmann, says justly: "It is not surprising that sculpture is not fully appreciated in England—or indeed by the general public anywhere. The eye is ever more flattered by colour (that is by painting) than by form (that is by sculpture). To produce bad sculpture is as it were, easier than bad painting, and the power to discriminate between the bad and the good in sculpture, appears to be a rare gift."<sup>1</sup>

"The charm of antique sculpture and that of classic scholarship are pretty much on the same level, both are equally incomprehensible to the ignorant."<sup>2</sup>

If the continual pleading of artists were listened to and a Valhalla of sculpture erected in London, where monuments to the good and great of our land might be worthily housed instead of being crowded into Westminster Abbey which they spoil, or relegated to the cold aisles of St. Paul's where they are not noticed, the demand for these works would create the supply, and the taste of both artists and the public be stimulated and educated. Besides, the effigies of *all* great men do not find

<sup>1</sup> "British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-day."

<sup>2</sup> Lady Eastlake.

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their fittest abode in places dedicated to religious worship. What is wanted is a vast national hall properly lighted and free of access to all. Its value for educational purposes would be incalculable. Owing to keener artistic perception the French and Italians apprise sculpture at its true value, and never ignore that beautiful art as we dare to do.

As it is sculpture is homeless and despised among us, and at one time reached in England the lowest depths of degradation; her fortunes appear to be changing slightly now, but only by extreme attention and encouragement can she be raised to the place among the arts to which she is entitled. While painting and architecture flourish, we have only to look at the statue of Napier in Trafalgar Square, by Theed, a statue which it has been proposed to take down in order to do honour to the hero it represents, to realize the inferiority of our portrait sculpture. What shall we say of Dr. Johnson masquerading in the dress of a Greek hero in St. Paul's, or the ballet girl who does duty as a Victory in the same Cathedral? Perhaps the most intolerable of all London's monuments is the figure of George I on the summit of St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, of which Walpole wrote:

When Harry the VIII left the Pope in the lurch  
In England they made him "The Head of the Church,"  
But George's good subjects, the Bloomsbury people,  
Instead of the Church, made him "Head of the Steeple."

The portrait statues on the Embankment are almost sufficient excuse for the Londoner's indifference when he is asked to supply funds for the erection of similar effigies. Meantime, instead of

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setting up sculptured monuments the natural records of departed greatness, to the glorious dead such as were and are erected in Italy and France, the funds which flow in so generously for a memorial to a popular king, hero, or author, are diverted after many preliminary disputes and debates to the making of clocks, obelisks, stained-glass windows, and endowment of hospitals, objects of utility, no doubt, which any millionaire might create without their being in memory of any one, but poor substitutes to hand down to posterity in place of such priceless works as the statue of Colleoni in Venice, or the tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy at Dijon.

As Ruskin pithily says, "There is no chance of our getting good Art unless we delight in it."



## CHAPTER VI

### GREEK SCULPTURE

I WOULD not have approached the already over-written subject of Greek sculpture had I not been convinced that no appreciation of sculpture is possible without study of that art in its highest development, which, the great Italian cinquecentists notwithstanding, was in Greece during the time of, and a little later, than Pheidias. But for the reason already given, I will pass over this part of my subject as briefly as may be, and treat it critically rather than historically.

Nor will I dwell on early Greek sculpture; memory, however, vividly recalls the great *Metopes from Selinonte* in the Museum at Palermo, and the noble *Charioteer* at Delphi, as giving the splendid promise afterwards so magnificently fulfilled in the golden age of Pheidias and his successors. These works were executed long before 490 B.C., the date at which that master flourished.

Anterior to him also are the exquisite sepulchral monuments at the Ceramicus in Athens, reliefs full of dignity and feeling. Among them, two are worthy of especial notice; one, the *Monument of Dexileos*, a youthful warrior on horseback, the other that of *Hegeso Proxeno*, a lady who is represented taking a jewel from a box held by an attend-



[Palermo]

DIANA AND ACTAEON





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ant. To this date, called the transition period, belongs the fine *Relief from the Temple of Demeter* at Eleusis, representing Demeter, Persephone, and Triptolemus, which is unique of its kind, for it is neither a Metope nor a sepulchral slab, but appears to have been used as an altar-piece.

Two hundred and fifty years elapsed between the rude beginnings of Daedalus and his pupils and the perfect development of sculpture at the hands of Pheidias and his contemporaries and pupils. The golden period of Greek art lasted till 330 B.C., after which, however, a few fine groups and statues were produced. The scope of this work permits only of the mention of a few of these.

Of the colossal statues made by Pheidias in ivory and gold few traces remain. The sole record of his *Zeus* of Olympia, which was sixty feet in height, is on a small coin of Elis; his *Minerva* of the Parthenon, which was thirty-eight feet high, we only know by a statuette in the Museum at Athens. Epictetus tells us it was the custom of the Athenians to make journeys to Olympia to behold the works of Pheidias and that "they considered it a misfortune to die without a knowledge of these things." The acute philosopher also makes another remark which admirably suits the purpose of this book. "Some art," he says, "is necessary to view a statue skilfully." One of the colossal *Dioscuri* on Monte Cavallo, Rome, and a statue of *Anacreon* in the Vatican complete the list of this master's known works till we arrive at their crowning glory, the sculptures of the Parthenon. These will be treated of at length in the chapter on sculpture in the British Museum.

In the second century B.C. Pausanias, a Roman,

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made a tour in Greece, and his celebrated "Itinerary," which still exists, proves him to have been an acute and diligent observer; it is from this source that we obtain nearly all our information about works of art which have since perished. He tells us that most of the sanctuaries in Greece were perfect museums of artistic treasures, including works of native artists, as well as gifts from foreign potentates. His description of the lost works of Pheidias are well known.

The contemporaries of Pheidias were Alcámenes (probably the artist of the *Venus of Milo* in the Louvre), Critias, Nestocles, and Hegias; their immediate successors were Ageladas, Callon, Polycletus, Phragmon, Gorgias, Lacon, Myron, Pythagoras, and Perillus. This list certainly contains the names of the sculptors employed on the Temples of Minerva and of Theseus.

Polycletus the sculptor of the *Doryphorus*, was working at Argos when Pheidias was employed on the Parthenon. Two more of his works have come down to us, the *Diadumenus* in the British Museum, and the *Wounded Amazon* in Berlin. He worked principally in bronze.

The *Niobe Group* in Florence is now said to be a Roman copy of the work of Scopas, who, to the grand style of Pheidias, added grace and variety. It consists at present of seventeen statues, and probably formed part of a temple or tomb, as from the unfinished appearance of their backs they could not have been intended to be seen from behind. The mother defending the child who runs to her for protection against the blinding shower of arrows, is far and away the best of these figures. Another very fine one is the Glyptothek at Munich.



[Capitol, Rome

THE VENUS OF THE CAPITOL





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Two figures called *Discobuli* or Disk Throwers, well known in every art school, are attributed the one to Myron, the other to Naucydes. They are distinguished by much vigour and breadth, but the actions are somewhat dubious in intention, and they are wanting in the refinement which characterizes the finest examples of Greek sculpture.

The noble torso in the Vatican called the *Belvedere Torso*, which has been the admiration of all artists ever since its discovery, is the work of Apollonius.

The *Statue of a Dying Hero* in the Museum of the Capitol, celebrated in the oft-quoted verses of Byron beginning, "I see before me the gladiator lie," is properly a dying hero according to Winkelman. To perfection of form Ctesilaus has here added pathos and dignity which raise this figure far above those of the Disk Throwers.

Praxiteles, like Pheidias, carried sculpture to a point of perfection which had never been reached before, and has never since been excelled. We are fortunate in having an undoubted work from his hand—the immortal *Hermes* of Olympia; the *Eros* and *Fame* of the Capitol, and *Apollo Sauroctonos* of the Louvre are ascribed to him.

To this era or near it belong the different statues of Venus or Aphrodite, of which almost every gallery in Europe boasts an example. The most beautiful of these is, in my opinion, the *Venus of the Capitol*. Art in this sublime figure has touched its extreme limit; where all is so perfect I should like to draw especial attention to the softness, delicacy and truth of the modelling of the back. It may, perhaps, be said the head looks

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rather large, but this is due to the thick mass of hair with which the sculptor has endowed his creation, which is replete with charm and radiant with youthful beauty. To her the following lines of Shelley apply:

Muse, sing the praise of crowned Aphrodite  
Who wakens with her smiles the lulled delight  
Of sweet desire, taming eternal kings  
Of heaven and men, and all the living things  
That fleet along the air, or whom the sea  
And earth with her maternal ministry  
Nourish innumerable. Thy delight  
All seek of crownéd Aphrodite.

Perhaps the *Venus of Milo* in the Louvre comes next in order of merit; it is in fact a larger (I don't mean in point of size but of style), grander figure than the former, but is not quite so delicate in the modelling.

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh  
While we for hopeless passion die:  
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,  
Were men but nobler than they are.

Richard Jeffries, the apostle of Nature, thus enthusiastically describes this figure. "Here is a woman perfect as a woman, with the love of children in her breast, her back bent for their delight. An ideal indeed, but real and human. Her form has the full growth of wide hips, deep torso, broad shoulders. Nothing has been repressed or fined down to a canon of art or luxury. A heart beats within her bosom; she is love; with her neither gold nor applause has anything to do; she thinks of the children."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The fact that this beautiful work, notwithstanding its great excellence, is not one of those which have been specially





[Syracuse]

THE LANDOLINA VENUS



## GREEK SCULPTURE

Interesting, as showing the influence of sculpture over literature, is the same distinguished author's appreciation of the *Venus Accroupie* in the same collection. "It is simply," he says, "a woman stooping to take a child pick-a-back, the child's little hand remaining upon the back, just as it was placed, in the act of clinging. . . . Few have even heard its name, for it has not been written and lectured into the popular mind like the *Venus de' Medici*. . . . But I hope and believe there are thousands of people in the world in full possession of their natural eyesight, and capable of appreciating the *Accroupie* when once their attention is called to it."

Compared with these sublime figures, the *Venus de' Medici* is small and sensual, and represents Aphrodite without her divinity.

The *Venus of Capua* at Naples is not nearly so subtle in workmanship as any of these, but is nevertheless a noble figure, grandly and broadly treated.

We owe the beautiful, youthful athlete called the *Apoxyomenos* in the Vatican to Lysippus; it is the only one of his many works that has been identified and one of the finest Greek statues that remain.

The *Apollo Belvedere*, "the lord of the unerring bow" of Byron, probably belongs to this period, as well as the *Diana Hunting*. Critics now aver that these statues are debased copies of famous originals, but no record in history or tradition is to be found respecting them. If the student will compare these figures with an undoubted work of the best period

extolled by ancient authors, affords us an approximate idea of the beauty of those lost masterpieces which formed the great marvel of antiquity."—LÜBKE.



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of Greek art—the *Hermes* of Olympia, for example—he will see the difference between what is merely great art and the greatest.

Affectation, absence of repose, a certain artificiality and smoothness of execution may be said to be the faults of the *Apollo Belvedere*. No such faults can be found with the *Mercury* or *Belvedere Antinous*, as it is sometimes called, in the same gallery in the Vatican, its repose of attitude and dignity of expression place it very high in the short catalogue of the best Greek works which have come down to us. Unfortunately, the artist who restored the standing foot where the leg was broken off has done so without due regard to the proper balance. The name of the sculptor is unknown, but it belongs undoubtedly to the finest period of art, and completely realizes the ideal of masculine beauty. The same remark applies to the *Meleager* in the same gallery.

The group of the *Laocoon* is the work of three sculptors of Rhodes towards the decline of sculpture in Greece. The unfortunate restoration of the father's arm is now remedied by the late discovery of the real arm in another attitude. Fine as is the principal figure in modelling and design, the boys are wanting in the characteristics of children.

Agasias was the sculptor of the *Fighting Gladiator* now in the Louvre. The figure is in violent action, which some critics seem to think that of running, but I incline to the idea that he is warding off a blow with the left arm on which we see traces of a shield, and about to strike with the right. *The Wrestlers*, *Sleeping Ariadne*, *Barberini Faun*, and many other figures and groups of this



*Alinari photo]*

*[The Louvre*

THE VENUS OF MILO





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date mark the commencement of the decadence of sculpture which set in about 290 B.C. Though good work was executed after this date, notably at Samothrace, where the glorious *Victory* of the Louvre was discovered, no statues of supreme greatness were produced. The golden age had lasted two hundred and fifty years.

In the small museum on the Acropolis of Athens are fourteen singular painted figures, coloured as seems to have been the practice of the Greeks from the earliest period down to the time of Praxiteles. A red tint still remains on the lips and hair of the *Hermes* at Olympia by that artist, and marks on the foot show he wore sandals of gilt bronze. It is strange an artistic nation such as Greece should have adopted a custom so contrary to our ideas, which insist that sculpture should depend for its effect on form alone. Modern attempts to resuscitate this practice, such as Gibson's in his *Tinted Venus*, have only ended in disaster. On this subject Flaxman is decisive. "We have all been struck by the resemblance of figures in coloured wax-work to persons in fits . . . But the very reasons which prove that colour in sculpture may have the effect of supernatural visions, fits, or death, prove at the same time that such practice is utterly improper for general representations of the human figure; because, as the tints of carnation in nature are consequences of circulation, wherever the colour of flesh is seen without motion, it resembles only death, or suspension of the vital powers.<sup>1</sup>

Greek sculptors worked in bronze as well as in marble, and that fewer works in metal than in the

<sup>1</sup> "Lectures on Sculpture."

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less useful material have come down to us is due to the fact that bronze has, in all ages, excited the cupidity of men who melted down groups and statues for their own base purposes. The finest collection of those that remain is to be found in the rich museum at Naples, and we owe their preservation to the guardianship of the lava of Vesuvius, most, or all of them, having been found at Herculaneum or Pompeii.

A colossal *Head of a Horse* in that museum is so large in style, so noble in its breadth of treatment and knowledge of anatomy as to mark it one of the finest Greek works which has been discovered; it recalls the perfection of the Elgin frieze. Nearly the same words serve to criticize the *Equestrian Statue of Alexander the Great*. A bust called *Plato*, a noble and dignified head, is one of the finest portraits antiquity has bequeathed us; it bears a haunting resemblance to the mediæval likenesses of Christ. The treatment of the hair is conventional and archaic. No one who has visited this museum can fail to have been struck by the charming statuette of *Narcissus*, perfect in modelling and in complete preservation. The *Mercury*, *Dancing Faun*, *Two Deer*, and a few other works testify to the skill of the old Greeks in bronze-casting as well as to their pre-eminence in all that concerns the art in which they remain unrivalled.

As to their merit as mere castings it is now difficult to judge, for the heat of the lava in which they were imbedded has destroyed and discoloured the surface of the metal. The cores and the cross-pieces for supporting them may, in some cases, still be seen as the ancient craftsmen left them.



*Anderson photo]*

*[Vatican, Rome*

THE BELVEDERE ANTINOUS OR MERCURY





## GREEK SCULPTURE

The *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* on the Capitol in Rome stands as an indisputable memorial of the eminence attained by Graeco-Roman artists. Like the statue of Colleoni at Venice, it marks the supreme point reached by the art of the era which produced it—to this day it remains and will probably remain for ever, the highest perfection attainable by the worker in bronze.

In the Vatican Gallery are a gilt bronze statue of *Hercules*, only remarkable for its colossal proportions, and a bust of *Augustus*, considered the best portrait of this Emperor.

The British Museum possesses a small but choice collection of Greek bronzes. Among them is a beautiful head of *Aphrodite* dating from the fourth century B.C. and a very remarkable winged head, thought to represent *Hypnos*, the God of Sleep. The modelling and treatment of this bust are very broad, rendering it one of the finest bronzes extant.

Mention must also again be made in this connection of the *Charioteer* recently discovered at Delphi, a grand realistic figure, simple and sincere in treatment.

The ancient Greeks also used terra-cotta for the expression of their thought. The charming little figures, found by thousands in the graves at Tanagra, first opened in 1874, bear witness to the diffusion of art throughout the country; scarcely one of them is bad, few indifferent, and the majority are distinguished by grace of attitude, elegance of design and correctness of proportion. Every museum in Europe possesses examples of this class of sculpture.

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When the Romans under Mummius took possession of Greece, they transmitted many masterpieces of ancient art to Rome. "Corinth was filled with them; but Mummius was so insensible to their surpassing excellence as to stipulate with those who contracted to convey them to Italy, that if any were lost in the passage they should be replaced by others of equal value!"<sup>1</sup> From the little island of Rhodes alone 3,000 statues were taken away.

Greek sculptors also emigrated to Rome, carrying with them the principles of their art. But Graeco-Roman sculpture never attained superlative excellence; its faults are violent action, deep undercuttings, flying draperies, and a debasement of conception and execution easily recognized by the skilled observer. Roman artists also executed copies of the most popular Greek works, and it is mostly these that have come down to us instead of the original statues and groups.

Art critics, blinded by the "glory that was Greece," are accustomed to regard Graeco-Roman sculpture with some degree of scorn. One of them indeed has remarked, "when we reach the Alexandrian, the Hellenistic, and finally the Graeco-Roman period, our interest flags, it is time to shut the book, leave the museum, and wend our way homewards."<sup>2</sup> But it is not easy for the artist to sneer at the school which produced the grand figure of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol who sits his horse with the grace and majesty of the youths in the frieze of the Parthenon, the collection of busts in the gallery there whose subjects will live for

<sup>1</sup> Smith's "History of Greece."

<sup>2</sup> Albinia Wherry, "Greek Sculpture with Story and Song."





*[Vatican, Rome]*

GRAECO-ROMAN BUST



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ever in the truthful marble, the *Barbarians on the Arch of Constantine*, and many an effigy of the warriors and poets of old Rome.

I have watched the equestrian statue of the great Emperor at all seasons and in all hours; in the summer light, when it seemed to glow with more than mortal glory, in the winter when its firm outlines were marked by tender flakes of snow, in the morning, when the level sunrays touched it into life, and in the evening, when its vast mass blended with the surrounding gloom, and I have never ceased to feel grateful to Time who has spared the noble form and features of the author of the "Meditations."

The most debased examples of Graeco-Roman, more properly perhaps called Graeco-Phoenician sculpture are those which once adorned the temples and long colonnades of Palmyra. Produced to order and in great numbers, they are coarse and barbaric, and retain hardly any trace of artistic feeling.

After these few cursory notes there naturally arises the inquiry, "In what then does the great perfection of the statues the Greeks have bequeathed us consist? It consists in their representing every beauty which belongs to the form made in the image of God, when fashion and pseudo-civilization have not degraded it; in perfect proportion, in symmetry, in grace, in strength, in that suppleness of limb we admire in the tiger; and, moreover, they are informed with that grandeur of sentiment and sublimity of thought which can only be expressed by profound scientific and mechanical knowledge and the richest imagination.

Greek art, as the embodiment of a people's living thought, perished with the nation that gave



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it birth. The only great school which succeeded it was the Italian of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and this could not in any way claim descent from it, but was the outcome of another civilization, another temperament. If we compare the former with the glorious summer of art, the latter may be represented by the shorter but scarcely less beautiful season called the Indian summer. Works such as those of Pheidias and Praxiteles ceased to be produced with the heroic civilization whose legitimate offspring they were, to be succeeded only after many centuries by the more naturalistic models of Donatello, and the fiery heroes and Sibyls of Michelangelo.

While the completed perfection of Greek sculpture, dead now in spirit and in thought, defies resuscitation, the Italian *cinquecento* school, founded upon nature and uninfluenced by the traditions of the antique, shows to us who live in these later days, the true basis for a school of art suited to our present needs and refinements; a modern school in which fresh nature shall be our teacher, not the effete cultivation of the Greek—for he exhausted nature in one direction. We must begin afresh where he began, not where he ended, if we would avoid the deadness of the copyist,<sup>1</sup> and endeavour to work up to a result in which we too shall combine style with nature; not perforce to the same

<sup>1</sup> That earnest student James Russell Lowell remarks on this subject that "every attempt at reproducing a bygone excellence by external imitation of it, or even by applying the rules which analytic criticism has formulated from the study of it, has resulted in producing the artificial, and not the artistic." And Victor Hugo's advice on the same subject is "Admire les grands maîtres; ne les imitons pas. Faisons autrement. Si nous réussissons tant mieux; si nous échouons, qu'importe?"



[Capitol, Rome

ACTAEON





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result which he achieved, but that to which our studies, under modern auspices, will *naturally* lead us. We work under less favourable influences than he did, the typical physique created by the exercises of the Palæstra is not at our service. Our climate is ruder, our habits more artificial than his were, but nature remains, her we must love and study, and from her derive our inspiration. Lowell, though he is writing of literature, yet indicates with true artistic feeling the manner in which we should approach and study antique sculpture:

“It is the grace of the Greeks, their sense of proportion, their distaste for the exaggerated, their exquisite propriety of phrase which steadies imagination without cramping it—it is these that we should endeavour to assimilate without the loss of our own individuality. We should quicken our sense of form by intelligent sympathy with theirs, and not stiffen it into formalism by a servile surrender of what is genuine in them. A pure form, says Schiller, helps and sustains; an impure one hinders and shatters. But we should remember that the spirit of the age must enter as a modifying principle, not only into ideas, but into the best manner of expression. The old bottles will not always serve for the new wine. A principle of life is the first requirement of all art, and it can only be communicated by the touch of the time and a simple faith in it. No effort to raise a defunct past has ever led to anything but just enough galvanic twitching of the limbs to remind us unpleasantly of life.”<sup>1</sup>

The largest collection of ancient Greek sculpture is in the Vatican, in whose vast and magnificent

<sup>1</sup> “My Study Windows.”

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halls, built for their reception, is accumulated a whole population of groups and statues. Inferior in quantity but not in interest are the renowned Galleries of the Capitol and the new Roman National Museum housed in a part of the Baths of Diocletian, which is added to year by year as the spade reveals more and more of the treasures of Italy's fecund soil. The Museum of Naples, formed by King Ferdinand IV and enriched by consecutive Bourbons, enshrines some superb masterpieces. In the Pitti and Uffizi Galleries in Florence, which owe their foundation to the Medici Family, are a few very celebrated works, such as the *Venus de Medici*, the *Dancing Faun*, and the *Niobe group*.

The National Museum at Athens contains a rich collection of Greek work of the very finest quality; not exiled under leaden skies, the majestic figures appear to the greatest advantage under the sun of the land that gave them birth. The sculptures are arranged chronologically; passing from room to room the visitor is able to trace the evolution of Greek art from the archaic stage to its incomparable development. The *Hermes of Andros* and the *Diadumenos*, a victor in the games who is binding a fillet round his head, are of the best period. A bronze figure of a youth has a curious story; it was found in the sea off the island of Cerigotto by a fisherman, who noticed the enamelled eyes gazing at him through the water, like those of the pretty little Nymph of the Eibsee in the Austrian Tyrol; it had been wrecked on its way from Athens to Rome with other spoils of the conquerors.

The collection of funeral stelae here is unique



*Alinari photo*

*[The Louvre]*

THE VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE





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and exceedingly interesting. Among these pathetic memorials is one representing a child held up by the nurse for its mother's last kiss, another shows two friends clasping their hands in silence for the final parting, in yet another a slave sits at his dying master's feet in the very ecstasy of grief. No more touching monuments to the dead can be found in all the world, no truer expression of sorrow for the departed into that dread silence of which all the philosophers of Greece could tell nothing, and whom all the survivor's agony could not recall.

The best collection on this side of the Alps is that in the British Museum, the honoured resting-place of the perfect Frieze of the Parthenon.

The Louvre is the enviable possessor of the *Venus of Milo*, the *Victory of Samothrace*, and the *Fighting Gladiator*, besides other treasures.

In the Glyptothek at Munich are a few fine examples of Greek art; among them is one of the best figures of the Niobe group, the head of Medusa admired by Leonardo da Vinci, and the sculptures from the pediment at Egina.

A few gems of Greek sculpture are in private collections, but the most important works which time has mercifully spared are in the museums above enumerated.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RENAISSANCE OF SCULPTURE

IN this elementary book on sculpture, I have not proposed to myself to write a history of the art but simply to give the amateur who loves it, or who may love it if he understand it, a few principles for his guidance to a *rational* appreciation of the best works. Sir Walter Besant, who wrote more understandingly of art and artists than many novelists, says with profoundest truth: "between the professional critic who can neither paint nor draw and the smallest of the men who can paint and draw, there is a gulf fixed that cannot be passed over." This is the reason of my endeavour as an artist to write on a subject I know as an amateur cannot know it, and therefore my sketches of the lives of the artists which follow, and the history of the various schools, is more or less perfunctory—the subject has often been treated by far abler pens than mine and in a more purely literary spirit.

When the student of history has traversed the long period of darkness and ignorance, which commenced with the fifth century—a period of bloodshed, barbarity, and the frenzied fury of the Crusades—he comes, in the middle of the thirteenth century, to the renewal of art and literature known



DONATELLO



*Alinari photo*]

[Padua

GATTAMELATA MONUMENT



## THE RENAISSANCE

as the Renaissance. At that date Niccolò Pisano revived the lost art of the Greek, and Cimabue and Giotto awakened painting from her long and death-like slumber. It seemed as if spring suddenly arrived to give life to flower and tree after a long and stormy winter, or as if a flood of sunshine penetrated into a dark and foetid dungeon.

The word "Renaissance" must not be considered to mean the revival of antique art but the re-birth of art under different conditions. Literature, science, and the whole trend of life itself felt the impulse of the age, and joined in the common movement.

Given a work of sculpture, the period when it was produced can of course be approximately fixed by the critic; or given a date, the style of a work executed then can be diagnosed. During a period of, roughly speaking, three centuries, from 1250 to 1550, all that is best in Italian art was produced.

The greatest sculptors of the Renaissance were:

Niccolò Pisano (d. 1278) and his relations,  
Giovanni and Andrea.

Jacopo della Quercia (1374-1438)

Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455)

Donatello (1386-1466)

Antonio Rossellino (1427-c. 1478)

The Della Robbia Family—Luca (1400-1482)—Andrea (1435-1528)—Giovanni (c. 1530)

Andrea Verrocchio (1435-1480)

Mino da Fiesole (1430-1484)

Desiderio da Settignano (1428-1464)

Matteo Civitali (1436-1501)

Giovanni Antonio Amadeo (d. 1475)

Andrea Sansovino (1460-1529)



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

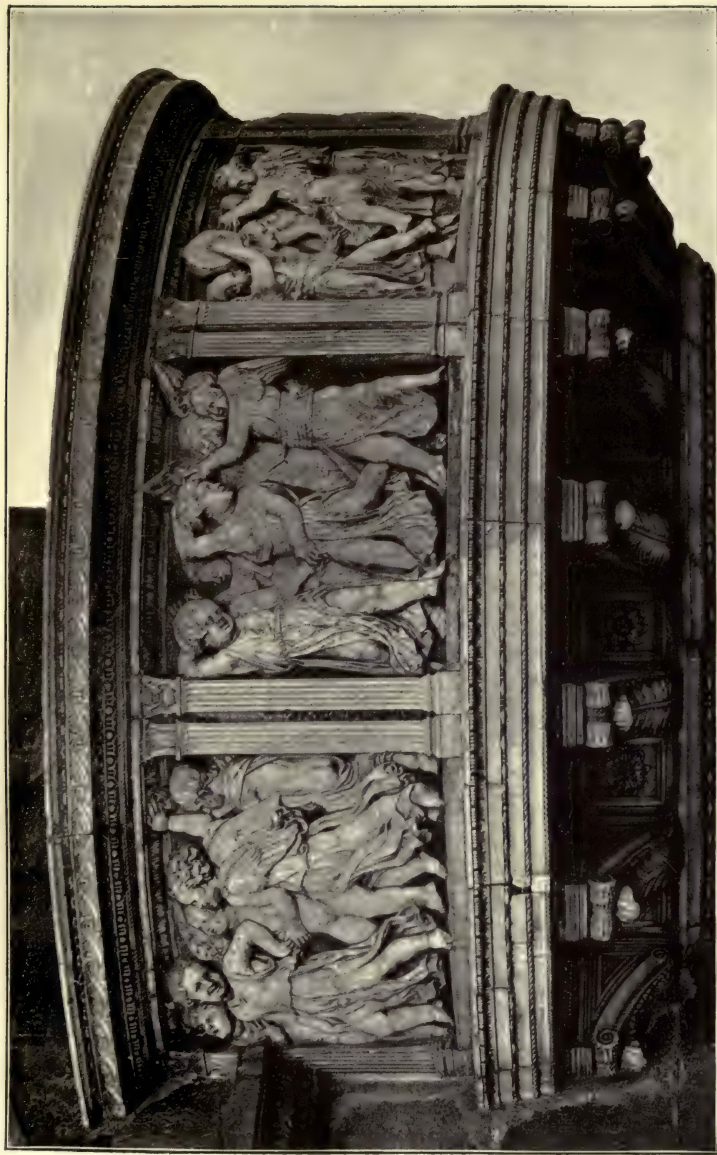
Pietro Torregiano (1472-1522)  
Michelangelo Buonaroti (1475-1563)  
Andrea Briosco (Riccio) (1480-1532)  
The Lombardi. Alfonso (1488-1537)—  
Pietro (d. 1519)—Tullio (d. 1559)  
Antonio Busti (Bambaja) (c. 1470)  
Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560)  
Antonio Gagini (1478-1536)  
Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571)  
Montorsoli (d. 1563)  
Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1607)  
Giovanni da Bologna (1524-1608)

With the private lives of these great artists the records of which are often obscure and contradictory, we have nothing to do here. But their works in which they still live possess an interest only surpassed by Greek art, for all who seek to understand sculpture.

### THE PISANI

To the quaint old town of Pisa belongs the honour of giving birth to the father of Italian sculpture, Niccolò Pisano. That his genius for art was developed by the study of some reliefs on a Graeco-Roman sarcophagus in the Campo Santo of his native city cannot, I think, be doubted, but, be this as it may, his strong and naturalistic style of modelling shows little trace of its influence. What it was hoped would have proved the second renaissance of sculpture in Italy initiated by Canova, failed from a too slavish adherence to imitation of the antique, an error impossible in the time of Pisano because the statues of the Greeks were still awaiting discovery; thus the older

DONATELLO



*Alinari photo*

[Duomo, Prato]

PULPITO DELLA CINTOLA



## THE RENAISSANCE

artist boldly and freely accepted nature alone as his guide and inspiration. Hence the vitality and truth of his work and that of his pupils, which have sometimes caused these artists to be designated "humanists."

Niccolo Pisano, as was customary in those days, combined architecture with sculpture. His first authentic work was the beautiful *Pulpit in the Baptistery of Pisa*, produced in 1260. It consists of a hexagon supported by nine columns; in its architectural features it somewhat resembles two earlier pulpits, one at Bari, the other at Amalfi. Probably I am wrong, but I cannot help a feeling of compassion for the poor lions who are made to support the pillars and their superincumbent weight; it would, I think, have given more dignity to the work had these masses of marble rested on the floor as is the case with the plain but superb pulpit in St. Mark's, Venice. The figures in the subjects on the panels are higher in relief than a Greek would have modelled them, but are replete with feeling and expression.

His next work was the celebrated *Arco di San Domenico* at Bologna. This is a square sarcophagus with six compartments of reliefs, so delicate in design and execution that it may be called goldsmiths' work in marble. The group of the *Madonna and Child* between two of the reliefs, is one of the sculptor's finest compositions. The canopy is by Niccolo da Bari, after his work upon it called invariably "dell Arco"; to it Tribolo and Michelangelo contributed statues about 200 years afterwards.

The *Pulpit in the Cathedral at Siena* resembles in architectural form that at Pisa, but is much



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more ornate. Niccolo's last authentic work was the noble fountain in the Piazza at Perugia which well bears comparison with Quercia's glorious *Fonte Gaia* at Siena.

The following eulogy pronounced on Niccolo Pisano by a recently deceased writer <sup>1</sup> on sculpture is neither exaggerated nor unmerited:

"Truly Niccolo did marvellous service to his age. He found sculpture dead and lifeless, and left it renovated and bearing the seeds of a new life. His whole life was spent in rearing up beauties in Italy which have been a joy to all subsequent ages. In fact he laid the foundation-stone of that renaissance of sculpture which culminated in Michelangelo."

Niccolo's son, Giovanni, was the architect of that perfect little Gothic gem, *Sta Maria della Spina*, at Pisa which rises above the waters of the river like a frozen fountain. He next designed the *Cloister*, which surrounds the Campo Santo in the same city and encloses the earth brought from Jerusalem by Archbishop Ubaldo Lanfranchi. The Campo Santo is a perfect museum of mediæval art and many works by Giovanni himself have found a resting-place within its walls. In S. Giovanni Evangelista at Pistoja is a *Pila* for holy water by him which is very classical in feeling, and over the western door of the Duomo at Florence a fine figure of the *Madonna*.

Andrea, the pupil of Giovanni, was the sculptor of the reliefs which represent the life of St. John on the south doors of the Baptistery at Florence, on which he is said to have worked for twenty-two years. In simplicity and true sculptural feel-

<sup>1</sup> Leader Scott.

DONATELLO



*Alinari photo]*

*[Or San Michele, Florence*

ST. MARK



## THE RENAISSANCE

ing they are superior to the more celebrated and more ornate doors of Ghiberti.<sup>1</sup> Andrea was also the sculptor of some lozenge-shaped reliefs and four statues of prophets on Giotto's *Campanile*. He was *Capo Maestro* of the Opera del Duomo at Orvieto where his son Nino worked and afterwards succeeded him.

"In the works of these artists" (the Pisani), says Flaxman, "the compositions are simple and intelligible; the female figures are frequently elegant in their movements and their drapery. In them are occasionally seen an originality of idea, and a force of thought seldom met with when schools of art are in the habit of copying from each other."

### JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA

This sculptor has been called, and with reason, the precursor of Michelangelo, who is said to have made drawings from *Della Quercia's* bas-reliefs at Bologna. Perkins remarks "It is not only in single figures but also in the general style of the reliefs which represent the creation of Eve, the expulsion from Paradise, and Eve spinning while her two children cling about her knees, that we feel between these two great men a similarity."

Born at Siena, he was one of the competitors for the gate of the Baptistery at Florence; his work was considered to stand next in merit to those of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi. In 1343 Quercia was appointed by the Signory of Siena to make a fountain for the great piazza, and the superb *Fonte Gaia* was the result. In form it

<sup>1</sup> A far better effect for outdoor purposes is obtained by the low relief invented by the Egyptians, and the *stacciato* relief of the Italians, than by high relief.



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is a square reservoir; the centre wall is divided into niches containing statuettes, and two side parapets are covered with reliefs, the subjects of which are taken from the Old Testament. Becoming greatly dilapidated in the course of time, it has lately been restored by the modern Siennese sculptor, Tito Sarrocchi. In novelty of design and beauty, *Fonte Gaia* is one of the model fountains of the world.

In the Cathedral at Lucca is the beautiful *Tomb of Ilaria del Carretto* by this artist. It consists of the simple and pathetic figure of Ilaria recumbent on a tomb decorated with a relief of children carrying festoons of flowers.

"I name it," says Ruskin, "not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period, but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitations of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times."

At Bologna he sculptured fifteen bas-reliefs for the great doorway of the Basilica, the subjects of which are taken from the Book of Genesis. The last three years of his laborious life were spent at Siena, where he held the office of Operajo del Duomo, and where several of his works may be seen.

### LORENZO GHIBERTI

This artist commenced life as a painter, to which circumstance it is probably due that the reliefs in his renowned doors of the Baptistery at Florence are pictorial rather than sculpturesque in treatment. If the statement be not too daring

DONATELLO



*Alinari photo]*

*[Church of the Vanchetoni, Florence*

ST. JOHN BAPTIST



## THE RENAISSANCE

with regard to a work which Michelangelo himself called "worthy to be the gates of Paradise," I feel disposed to say that the figures and heads of prophets and sibyls are finer than the reliefs. This opinion has the support of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who says of the reliefs, "Ghiberti's landscape and buildings occupied so large a portion of the compartments, that the figures remained but secondary objects, entirely contrary to the principle of the ancients." In one of these panels (the top on the left hand) no less than five events are represented as taking place at once, the creation of Adam, the creation of Eve, the Temptation of Eve, the Expulsion, and God the Father surrounded by angels. "This form of sculpture," it has been truly remarked, "into which perspective is so freely introduced, is by some considered meretricious and contrary to the canons of art, and in the hands of other and lesser men, it does indeed seem to be so, and such work is generally more or less of a failure. Ghiberti, however, by his complete mastery of technique, and his poet's touch, has overridden the canons, and in spite of all produced what, in its way, can only be called perfection."<sup>1</sup>

The border of fruit and foliage which runs round these doors is a masterpiece of delicate and intricate modelling. These doors occupied the best part of the sculptor's time for a period of twenty-nine years. He himself says:

"I strove to imitate Nature to the utmost, and by investigating her methods of work to see how nearly I could approach her. I sought to understand how form strikes upon the eye, and how the

<sup>1</sup> Hope Rea, "Tuscan Artists."



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theoretic part of sculptural and pictorial art should be managed. Working with the utmost diligence and care, I introduced into some of my compositions as many as a hundred figures, which I modelled upon different planes, so that those nearest the eye might appear larger, and those more remote smaller in proportion."

Ghiberti's next works were the statues of *St. John the Baptist* and *St. Matthew* for two of the niches in Orcagna's church of Or San Michele.

The *Monuments of Ludovico degli Obizzi* and of the *Gonfaloniere Bartolommeo Valori* in Santa Croce, and the *Tomb of S. Zenobius*, Bishop and Patron Saint of Florence, were executed by him. He also made two reliefs, the *Baptism of our Lord* and *St. John before Herod* for the font of the Baptistery at Siena, beautiful in modelling and composition. Much of Ghiberti's time seems to have been employed on goldsmiths' work.

### DONATELLO

Costui

Diè vita ai marmi, e i marmi a lui.

The art of sculpture which the Pisani and Ghiberti had brought to such a pitch of excellence, was carried to still greater perfection by Donatello, "scultore rarissimo e statuario maraviglioso," "il maestro di chi sanno," one of the giants of the Renaissance. He improved upon the older artists by earnest study of nature and severe rejection of the immaterial or merely picturesque, and gave to sculpture that impetus which culminated in the mighty works of Michelangelo. In close observation of nature, in truth of modelling, in charm of

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expression, his works have never been excelled. There is a certain mannerism about them from which we recognize a work by Donatello at a glance, which is perhaps only an added grace. His severe and simple style may have had its foundation in the fact that at an early age he accompanied Brunelleschi to Rome, and there drew and studied every fragment of antique art he could find, though he never allowed his genius to be dominated by the influence of the Greeks. He was the centre of the art-world of his period, and the object of its profound homage.

His first commission on his return to Florence was a figure of *David*. This is on the Campanile, and is known as *lo Zuccone* (the bald head). A *Daniel*, a *Joshua*, the *Four Evangelists* on the façade of the Duomo, *Abraham with Isaac at his feet*, and a *Prophet* followed in quick succession. The Guild of Armourers gave him an order to make a statue of *St. George* for Or San Michele, which is esteemed by many critics his *chef d'œuvre*. Its vigour, simplicity, good proportions, and originality of design, entitle it to take very high rank indeed among the masterpieces of Renaissance sculpture. The *Tomb of Pope John XXIII* in the Baptistery of Florence, and that of *Cardinal Rinaldo Brancacci* in St. Angelo in Nilo at Naples were his next important works.

Donatello then made a second visit to Rome, and, while there, executed the *Tomb of the Arch-deacon Giovanni Crivelli* for the church of Ara Celi, a statue of *S. John the Baptist* for S. Giovanni in Laterano, and a *Tabernacle of the Sacrament* for St. Peter's.

On his return to Florence, he commenced the

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*Reliefs for the Singing Gallery* over the doors of the sacristy of the Duomo which may now be seen in the National Museum of that city. He also executed a similar series for the outer pulpit of the Cathedral at Prato. These charming figures of children are full of purity and vivacity and seem to express the very ecstasy of motion.

His group of *Judith and Holofernes* in the Loggia dei Lanzi is a comparative failure; the figures are confused and restrained in attitude. The figure in wood of a *Magdalen* in the Baptistery and the bronze *St. John* now in the Bargello, are specimens of realism carried to excess.

In 1444 we find the artist at Padua, where he executed many important commissions. These include two bas-reliefs, a *Dead Christ between Angels* and the *Four Miracles of St. Antonio*, four *Symbols of the Evangelists*, an *Ecce Homo*, and many other works. His largest work at Padua was the bronze statue of *Gattamelata*, the first equestrian statue made since the days of the Romans. The figure is fine, but the horse has the failing of moving both legs together on the same side, and its colossal proportions seem to dwarf the rider. The curve of the tail, too, is unhappy.

Few who have visited Tuscan churches can have failed to notice the memorial slabs, sometimes of marble, sometimes of bronze, laid in the pavement like brasses in our own cathedrals, the difference being that they are carved in low relief instead of being incised. The authors of these works are mostly unknown, a very beautiful one, however, in the Duomo of Siena is by Donatello. Worn by the tread of innumerable feet through the centuries, these old memorials, defaced as they are, show



LUCA DELLA ROBBIA



*Brogi photo*]

[*Duomo Museum, Florence*

PORTION OF THE SINGING GALLERY





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traces of firm draughtsmanship and masterly design. In Santa Croce in Florence there are many specimens, and Mr. Ruskin is chiefly responsible for the admiration awakened in most English tourists for one near the door, now nearly worn away.

Fortunately, however, we can still form an idea of the original beauty of these monuments. In the Certosa di Val d'Ema are three perfectly preserved, in which critics trace with certainty the hand of Donatello himself. The best, called the *Sleeping Warrior*, represents a youth in armour lying in a position of perfect rest; his armour is covered with the richest and most delicate ornament. The other two are scarcely less beautiful and have been preserved to us in almost perfect condition; they serve to show how great a loss has been sustained by the obliteration of those monumental slabs in which Tuscan churches were particularly rich. Probably the *Monument to Fra Angelico da Fiesole* in Sta Maria sopra Minerva, Rome, was originally one of these memorial slabs.

Donatello was a most prolific artist. He excelled in modelling in low relief; his *Sta Cecilia*<sup>1</sup> in Lord Wemyss' possession and *St. John* in the Bargello are known, by casts at least, to every student of art. A purer profile, a more charming contour, a sweeter expression than those of the *St. Cecilia* have never been rendered. His portrait busts are strikingly life-like, and are treated with originality and truth unattempted before. Among his finest productions is a *Head of Christ*, one of the most profoundly felt presentments of this difficult sub-

<sup>1</sup> Experts differ as to whether this is a genuine Donatello or not.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

ject in the whole range of art. Suffering and hope, divinity and humanity, are all expressed in the noble features of this supreme work.

A collection of casts from Donatello's works, nearly complete, may be seen in the National Museum, Florence.

### THE ROSSELLINI

A family of five brothers all devoted to art, of whom Bernardi, the eldest, rose to eminence as an architect. Antonio, the youngest, was the most gifted, and to him we owe the fine *Monument to Cardinal Jacopo di Portogallo* in San Miniato near Florence. For the Duke of Amalfi he executed a similar work in memory of the Duchess, in the Church of Santa Maria di Monte at Naples. He also sculptured three panels for the *Pulpit at Prato*, and three or four more of his works are in the Florentine Gallery.

### THE DELLA ROBBIA FAMILY

Luca della Robbia commenced his artistic career as a sculptor in marble, and in that material executed the lovely figures of children for the *Cantoria* or Singing Gallery in the Duomo at Florence, now in the Museum of that city, and afterwards the *Tomb of Bishop Federighi* in the Church of S. Francisco di Paola. But, either because he found carving in marble too long a process to satisfy the impatience of his creative genius, or because of some more material consideration, he ceased to employ it, and invented the quicker method of modelling in terra-cotta and afterwards coating it with a glaze of which he

ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA



*Brogi photo]*

*[At the Hospital of the Innocenti, Florence*

A BAMBINO





ANDREA VERROCCHIO



*Salviati photo*

*[Venice]*

BRONZE STATUE OF BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI



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alone possessed the secret. This white glaze is far from equalling the mellow tone of marble or deeper hue of bronze, and, away from the position for which they were intended, his works lose the charm of their effect. Neither are the coloured fruit and flowers with which he surrounded many of his reliefs altogether pleasing. As Dr. Williamson most justly remarks:

“Luca’s work does not well bear removal. It is peculiarly suited to the places for which it was made, and under the brilliant sky of Italy is at home.” No doubt, however, this clever artist, whose modelling and sentiment are always superb, invented a style of art which became universally popular, which no one has ever rivalled, and the secret of whose production perished with the family who gave it its name.

In my opinion the *Altarpiece of the Church of the Osservanza* near Siena is his *chef d’œuvre*, and I entirely agree with those art critics who ascribe it to the master himself.

The *Infants in swaddling clothes* in the Spedale degli Innocenti are among the best works of his nephew Andrea.

### ANDREA VERROCCHIO

To Andrea Verrocchio, a pupil of Donatello, belongs the distinction of having produced the finest bronze equestrian statue in existence—that of *Bartolommeo Colleoni* in the Piazza of the Scuola di S. Marco, Venice. The only work of the kind comparable to it is the *Marcus Aurelius* on the Capitol, Rome. The magnificent seat and calm majesty of the rider, the grand action of the horse,



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the nobility of the whole conception, place this work far and away above Donatello's *Gattamelata*. The handsome pedestal is by Leopardi, and merits attention.

His *David* in the National Museum is a mean and flippant rendering of the youthful hero; his well-known *Boy with a Dolphin*, in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, is a much stronger work. The *Tomb of Piero and Giovanni de Medici* by him, in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo, is a simple porphyry sarcophagus; the statuettes in silver executed for Pope Sixtus IV and almost all his works in metal have disappeared. But his *Colleoni* ensures him a splendid immortality.

### MINO DA FIESOLE

The original and delicate works of this sculptor are the delight of the amateur and the connoisseur; their truth to nature, finish and elegance compel the admiration of both classes. The advance in the art of sculpture from the period when the Pisani covered the façade of the Duomo at Orvieto with a riot of foliage, is well marked in the charming, almost classical, scrolls and arabesque of Mino.

His *Tombs of the two Bishops Salutati*, which are in the Duomo at Fiesole, exhibit his peculiar style of excellence both in portraiture and in that delicate ornamentation with which he delighted to adorn his monuments. Marble seems to have become soft under his chisel, and as responsive to his touch as clay itself. For these old craftsmen did not employ hired labour; the work they did not do themselves was performed by pupils under their immediate supervision.

MATTEO CIVITALI



*Alinari photo]*

*[Lucca Cathedral*

ADORING ANGEL



## THE RENAISSANCE

The *Tombs of Bernardo Guigni* and of *Count Ugo* in the Badia, Florence, are highly ornate examples of his characteristic manner. His *Tomb of Paul II* is one of the treasures of the crypt of St. Peter's, Rome. In the church of Sta Maria in Trastevere is one of his most charming tabernacles, inscribed "Opus Mini"; another ornaments the Duomo of Volterra. The *Altar-piece for the Chapel of the Baglioni* family in the Cathedral of Perugia, does not reach his usual level of excellence. Many portrait busts, all with the stamp of verisimilitude, are attributed to this excellent artist.

### DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO

He was a pupil of the great Donatello. Though most of his works are lost, one of the best is happily still extant—the *Monument of Carlo Marzupini* in Santa Croce, Florence. The workmanship resembles that of Mino da Fiesole of whom he was either a friend or pupil, but is less delicate and tender; the *Virgin and Child with adoring angels* is, however, a charming composition. In the Church of S. Lorenzo at Florence is an altar by him on which stands a figure of the *Infant Jesus* formerly so highly esteemed that it was only shown on Christmas Day.

### MATTEO CIVITALI

The first known work of this architect and sculptor was the *Tomb of Pietro da Noceto* in the Cathedral at Lucca, where stands also his masterpiece, the *Temple which contains the Volto Sacro*. In the same church is a charming *Adoring Angel*



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which exhibits all his merits of expression and high finish, and also his mannerisms, such as hardness of drapery, ornamental treatment of hair, and exaggeration of the extremities. In Genoa he decorated the chapel where the ashes of S. John the Baptist are supposed to be, with six life-sized statues, of which the *Zachariah* is the best.

### GIOVANNI ANTONIO AMADEO

Amadeo's title to fame is his huge *Monument to Bartolommeo Colleoni* in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore at Bergamo, considered one of the best Renaissance sculptures in Lombardy.

### ANDREA SANSOVINO

The principal achievement of this sculptor was the design for the *Marble Shrine at Loreto*, but the only work by his hand there is the *Annunciation* and one of the figures of prophets. His *Tomb of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza* in Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, is wanting in that purity and elegance of style which distinguish similar works by sculptors of this period. The recumbent figure of the Cardinal, though broadly treated, is constrained in attitude.

### PIETRO TORREGIANO

Torregiano, "the roving soldier-sculptor of Florence," was a fellow student of Michelangelo in the gardens of St. Mark and, being of a jealous and irascible disposition, owing to a slight dispute struck the great sculptor such a blow upon his nose that he became disfigured for life. After a period of fighting in the army, for which pursuit he

MICHELANGELO



Brogi photo]

[St. Peter's, Rome.

PIETÀ



## THE RENAISSANCE

seems to have been particularly fit, he took up sculpture again, went to England, entered the service of King Henry VIII and was commissioned to make a *Monument to Henry VII* in Westminster Abbey. This tomb, which is considered the best example of Renaissance style in England, is of black marble surrounded by a chantry chapel of brass. The armorial bearings and ornaments of every kind are finely wrought, the effigy of the king is not wanting in dignity and repose, but the lines of the drapery are terribly hard and cutting. Fuller, in his "Church History," calls it "a pattern of despair for all posterity to imitate." From its similarity of style he is supposed to have made the *Monument of Margaret, Countess of Richmond* which stands in the adjoining chapel. A fine specimen of this sculptor's work may be seen in the Rolls' Museum, London.

Torregiano spent the rest of his life in Seville, whither he had gone in hopes of securing the commission for the monuments to Ferdinand and Isabella. That he did some work of sculpture in that city seems certain, but there is no documentary evidence to show which they are. Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell relates that a group by him of the *Virgin and the Infant Saviour* so pleased the Duke of Arcos that he ordered a repetition of it for his own palace, and when the work was delivered, sent the artist away rejoicing with as much copper coin as two men could carry. But on arriving at his own house, and discovering that this weighty recompense amounted to only thirty ducats, Torregiano in a fit of passion flew back, hammer in hand, and dashed the statue to pieces before the Duke's face. For this outrage on a sacred image the unhappy



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sculptor was seized by the Inquisition, condemned as a lunatic, and died soon after in its dungeons by voluntary starvation.<sup>1</sup>

### MICHELANGELO BUONAROTI

The mere name of Michelangelo inspires admiration, wonder, and awe.

We reach the culmination of the Renaissance with this supreme artist who carried sculpture to a point beyond which it seems impossible to advance. Whether we consider painting, sculpture, or architecture, in all three arts he has excelled whoever preceded or succeeded him. When we stand before the *Medici Tombs* in Florence, gaze at the *Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel*, or enter the *Basilica of St. Peter's*, at Rome, we are face to face with miracles of art which have never before been equalled, and which will in all probability never be approached. Sir Joshua Reynolds, himself an artist of consummate ability, rises to unusual eloquence in speaking of Michelangelo. "Were I now to begin the world again," he exclaimed, "I would tread in the steps of that great master: to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man." And his last words addressed to the students of the Royal Academy were: "I feel a self congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy,

<sup>1</sup> "Annals of the Artists of Spain."

MICHELANGELO



[National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh]

WAX MODEL FOR STATUE OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI



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and from this place, might be the name of Michelangelo."

The mighty master's first works were sculpture, a *Sleeping Cupid*, a *Bacchus and young Faun*, the colossal *David*, and a *Pietà*. His wonderful composition, the *Cartoon of Pisa*, foreshadowed that tremendous conception the *Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel*, of which Flaxman says it is "unparalleled in the history of art, ancient or modern, in the vastness of the idea—the grandeur of the subject, comprehending the entire scheme of divine revelation, the dignity of the characters, among which, our reason is convinced, are those which cannot be represented."

His *Last Judgement* is less admirable, because the composition is somewhat scattered. But in the *Medicean Tombs* and in the statue of *Moses*, in S. Pietro in Vincoli, he rises to those heights of sublimity where none has ever been able to follow him.

The mighty master's *Two Slaves*, now in the Louvre, which were intended, like the *Moses*, to form part of the magnificent monument to Pope Julius II, are sublime in sentiment and marvellous in conception. In fertility of imagination he has never been excelled, and in facility of execution none has surpassed him.

Let the name of Michelangelo, like that of Shakespeare, never be pronounced without reverence.

Language has been exhausted in praise of Michelangelo, and volumes written in his honour; it would be an impertinence to add more here on this subject.

What we are now concerned with is to observe



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that the art which we are studying, having reached its zenith in the hands of this unrivalled genius, began almost immediately to decline, whether because his stupendous style, badly imitated as it was by innumerable copyists, contained within it certain elements of decay, or whether, despairing of reaching his imposing eminence, artists ceased to struggle after the highest as their own genius indicated, is a question impossible of solution. Probably both considerations helped to hasten the catastrophe. Overshadowed by his mighty spirit, sculpture languished to decay; no artist had courage to strike out an original path for himself, but all, degenerating into mere imitators, produced works of little or no merit. For in art, as in life, to stand still is to retrograde, and once the highest is reached, if it cannot be maintained, the only path is downward.

### ANDREA BRIOSCO (RICCIO)

His most famous work is the ornate bronze *Easter Lamp*, eleven feet high, at Padua. For St. Fermo at Verona he executed bronze *Monuments for two Members of the Della Torre Family*; four reliefs relating to the finding of the Cross, and an *Ascension of the Virgin*, are in the Academy at Venice. In this artist's work the influence of the antique almost completely supersedes the conventional Christian style.

### THE LOMBARDI

Whether this name implies a real family connection, or is merely the collective designation of a company of artists, is uncertain. Pietro Lombardi

A BUSTI (IL BAMBAJA)



*Atinari photo*

[*Milan*]

DETAIL OF THE TOMB OF GASTON DE FOIX



TULLIO LOMBARDO



*Alinari photo*

TOMB OF GUIDARELLO GUIDARELLI

[*Ravenna*]





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executed the enormous *Monument of the Doge Pietro Mocenigo* in SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice in 1488. Tullio, his son, was the sculptor of the important *Tomb of Guidarello Guidarelli*, in the Institute of Fine Arts at Ravenna. The simplicity and dignity of the recumbent warrior place this work high amid the examples of contemporary art.

### AGOSTINO BUSTI (BAMBAJA)

the sculptor of the monument to Gaston de Foix, which is now scattered, some parts being in the Ambrosiana and others in the Brera Gallery. "Never," says a German critic, "has a more perfect conception of individual life been produced than the youthful figure of the hero. To this is added the most wonderful skill in execution." The *Monument to Cardinal Caracciolo* in Milan Cathedral is another work of his. On the sarcophagus the figure of the deceased lies in calm sleep, behind him stand Christ, St. Peter, and St. Paul, while above is a medallion of the Madonna and Child.

Busti was also employed on the Certosa of Pavia, that supreme achievement of wealth and bad taste.

### BACIO BANDINELLI

made a long stride in the downward course. The very names of his works, *Orpheus in Hades*, *Hercules and Cacus*, indicate the return to classicalism which was caused by his early studies in Rome. He mistook size for grandeur, the muscles of his figures are like blown bladders, and they themselves are devoid of all grace and proportion. The dispute between him and Michelangelo for the

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possession of a huge block of marble, out of which he carved the second of these groups, is too well known to need repetition.

The best works of Bandinelli are the reliefs he executed for the balustrade of the choir of the Duomo in Florence. How little religious sentiment animated this sculptor can be imagined when it is narrated that he changed statues of *Adam and Eve*, which did not please him, into the *Bacchus and Ceres* still to be seen in the Boboli Gardens.

### ANTONIO GAGINI

was the most famous sculptor of Sicily. His principal work is the *Tribune behind the High Altar* at Santa Cita in Palermo; others are in the Cathedral, Messina. He founded a school of sculpture which was carried on with much success by his sons and nephews. "Taking both sides of Antonio Gagini's work," says Mr. Sladen, who has made himself thoroughly acquainted with Sicilian art, "his sculptures of the human form and his low relief arabesques and other conventional ornamentations, it is doubtful if any of the great fifteenth-century Florentines excelled him when at his best."

### BENVENUTO CELLINI

Cellini's chief claim to our gratitude lies not in the works of art he produced, but in the graphic account he has bequeathed us of his blustering, roving life. As frank as Rousseau, he brings all the details of his assassinations and *amours* sincerely before us, always to his own glorification. He does not scruple to tell us of his vices, his

MONTORSOLI



[Messina]

THE FOUNTAIN OF ORION





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cowardice and treachery, or ever hesitate to express his profound appreciation of himself and his works. However, his autobiography is a powerful picture of the stormy and dissolute times in which he lived and bore part.

Cellini excelled chiefly in goldsmith's work; the effect of his study of that art can easily be traced in his bronze *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* in the Loggia de' Lanzi. Perseus is represented as an elegant youth, whose poise is unhappy; modelled a few inches high, the figure would seem admirably in place on the top of a vase. His *Nymph at Fontainebleau*, in the Louvre, is about two heads too tall.

In the choir of the chapel in the Escorial is his celebrated Crucifix; wonderful for skill of execution, like most works of this master, it is too ornamental in style to express profound religious feeling. Cellini himself admired this work of his, but as he was in the habit of liking all his own productions exceedingly, this is scarcely a satisfying opinion.

His busts of *Duke Cosimo* in the National Museum, Florence, and of *Bindo Altoviti* gained the approval of Michelangelo himself, who wrote, "that he had always known him as the finest goldsmith in the world, and that henceforth he should recognize him as a great sculptor."

### MONTORSOLI

Montorsoli was a pupil of Michelangelo, who executed numerous works in Sicily, the best of which is the superb *Fountain of Orion* in the Piazza del Duomo, Messina. It consists of two

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highly ornamented basins with a group of figures on the top. There are few more finely executed female figures in the whole range of sculpture than those which support the upper basin. Montorsoli also sculptured the grand figure of *Neptune*, which adorns the sea-front of the same city, having happily escaped the great earthquake. These works give evidence that in this artist Michelangelo had no unworthy pupil.

### ALESSANDRO VITTORIA

One of the best sculptors of his age. His nobly poised and modelled figures may be seen on many a holy water stoup and tomb in Venice, and immediately attract attention by their breadth and largeness of style. Two fine examples are in the Church of S. Zaccaria—*S. Zaccaria* and *S. Giovanni Battista*. His *Monument of Pietro Bernardo* is in the Church of the Frari. The student of sculpture will be well rewarded if he seeks for the works of this glorious artist, who is not so well known to English travellers as his merits deserve.

### GIOVANNI DA BOLOGNA

The two colossal equestrian statues of *Cosimo I* in the Piazza della Signoria, and of *Ferdinand I* in the Piazza della SS. Annunziata, Florence, are the admirable works of this artist, to whose genius we also owe the charming little *Mercury*, poised on one foot and pointing upwards, in the National Museum. The god is represented alighting on the earth as he descends from the realms above, and the lightness and elegance of the action are mar-

BARTOLOMMEO BUON



*Salviati photo]*

*[Venice*

THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON  
(PALACE OF THE DOGES, VENICE)





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vellously rendered. The same sculptor's other works, the *Rape of the Sabines* and *Hercules and the Centaur*, are not equal to any of those first named, but his *Fountain of Neptune* at Bologna takes high rank among productions in the florid style of these decadent times.

Giovanni da Bologna died in 1594, the last of the great masters who revived the art of sculpture in Italy. During the sixteenth century little or nothing of importance was produced, while the seventeenth saw the utter abasement of the art in the works of Bernini (1598-1680) and his school.

This Neapolitan artist having exerted so long and powerful an influence over sculpture, unexampled except by that of Michelangelo, seems to need mention here, if it were only to add another page to the volumes of condemnation with which art-critics have justly overwhelmed his work. Yet he was universally regarded during his lifetime as the chief artist of the period, and filled both Rome and Paris with his meretricious productions. Some idea of the quantity of his output may be obtained from the facts that he designed a hundred and sixty-two figures for the colonnade of St. Peter's, the angels on the Bridge of St. Angelo, the figures in the Lateran, and devised the principal façade of the Louvre. His youthful work, *Apollo pursuing Daphne*, indicates the native bias of his taste, and shows a profound misunderstanding of the limits of his art. The dramatic and ridiculous colossal *Statue of Constantine* at the entrance to the Vatican, the vicious *Rape of Proserpine*, and, in fact, the whole series of Bernini's works are false in taste, meretricious in conception, and repulsive to the finer feelings of humanity. The *Monuments of Urban*

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*VIII* and of *Alexander VII*, in St. Peter's, in both of which a skeleton in action appears, and curtains made of different coloured marbles, can only serve one purpose—to show the student of sculpture what to avoid. Bernini's treatment of drapery was one of his most vicious points, he never makes it indicate form, but, resembling crumpled paper more than textile fabric, it disturbs the eye and destroys all sense of repose and beauty. One great quality he had, however, unparalleled dexterity in the mechanical part of his art; we can also credit him with a certain amount of originality.

Two sculptors of the period only seem to have escaped the fatal influence of Bernini. One, Stefano Maderno (1571-1636), succeeded in producing the really simple and pathetic *Statue of St. Cecilia*, in the church of that name in Rome; the other, François Duvernay (1594-1644) of Brussels, called *il Fiammingo*, is celebrated for his skilful modelling of children.

With these exceptions we may accept the words *sei cento* art as synonymous with exaggeration and mannerism.

STEFANO MADERNO



[Church of Sta Cecilia, Rome]

TOMB OF ST CECILIA





## CHAPTER VIII

### BRITISH SCULPTURE

**I**NTO the dim past of the beginnings of English Sculpture I do not think it would be useful to my present purpose to attempt to penetrate; it is sufficient to indicate that its earliest development may be seen in many a cathedral and on numerous sepulchral monuments. Flaxman cites Wells Cathedral as possessing the finest early English statuary, and says it was finished in 1242 at the same time "that Niccolo Pisano, the Italian restorer of sculpture, exercised that art in his own country." Interesting to the historian and antiquarian, a study of these works would scarcely benefit the overtasked artist, who in these days is nothing if not practical. Nor, on the other side, are those who live in our own age, whose hands we may perhaps shake in the common intercourse of society, legitimate subjects of criticism. Our present range of study with regard to English sculpture is thus limited to those sculptors about whose lives and work we have definite information and whose careers have ended.

Long after the completion of our Gothic cathedrals, and just as the tomb of Henry VII in Westminster Abbey was finished (which, as we have seen, is the work of Italians) the art of sculp-

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ture in England underwent the chill eclipse of the Reformation. Henry VIII issued an injunction in 1538 to the effect that all images which had been worshipped should be pulled down; and, a still greater misfortune, in the reign of Edward VI, the Protector and Council ordered all statues to be destroyed. From this date to 1735—a period of two hundred years—the records of the art are almost blank, Rysbrack and Roubilliac, two foreigners, executing such monuments as were desired.

In 1735 Thomas Banks, R.A., whom we may fairly reckon as the first of our genuine English sculptors, was born. Having gained the gold medal of the Royal Academy, Banks went to Rome and studied there for seven years, in the meantime executing several important works. His relief, *Thetis rising from the sea to comfort Achilles*, highly praised by Flaxman, is in the National Gallery of British Art, and serves to show how completely the artist failed to resist the influence of the antique, under whose supreme domination Canova and Thorvaldsen were then working. His statue of *Achilles* is also executed in imitation of the antique, but the *Falling Giant*, his diploma work in the Academy, is a stronger and more original conception. Various public monuments of questionable taste were also executed by Banks, and the Empress Catherine II of Russia purchased a statue of *Cupid* by him. Banks died in 1805.

Joseph Nollekens, R.A. (b. 1737, d. 1823), developed a style of modelling full of individuality and freshness. He succeeded best in portrait busts, which are distinguished by simplicity and truth to nature. John Smith, who has written a

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most entertaining biography of this artist, asserts that he modelled one thousand busts in the course of his long life.

John Flaxman, R.A. (b. 1755, d. 1826), is perhaps the best known of English sculptors, owing to his designs for Wedgwood's pottery and to his once-popular outline illustrations of Homer. Early in life he executed a colossal group of four figures, *The Fury of Athamas* from Ovid's "Metamorphoses." This, after a period spent in Rome, was followed by *Cephalus and Aurora*, the *Monuments of Earl Mansfield* and of *Captain James Montague* in Westminster Abbey; of *Lord Nelson*, *Earl Howe*, and *Captain Millar* in St. Paul's Cathedral, and many other statues and groups. His finest colossal work is the *Archangel Michael and Satan*, executed in marble for the Earl of Egremont, the original model of which, and many others, may be seen in the Flaxman Museum, London University. His *Shield of Achilles* is a proof of how strongly his mind was saturated with classical learning; yet he owes his finest inspirations to Christian literature. Beautiful examples of these are in Micheldever Church, Hants, forming a monument to the family of Sir Francis Baring. In the centre is a sitting figure representing *Resignation*; on either side are reliefs, "*Thy Kingdom Come*" and "*Deliver us from Evil*." In purity of sentiment and feeling these compositions would be difficult to surpass. Flaxman's outline illustrations of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" are well known; they do not possess that wealth of imagery which hits the popular taste, and, being severely denuded of the charms of light and shade, are essentially a sculptor's work.



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The industry of the man was marvellous; when not carving or modelling, a pencil was always in his hand. Ever beside a wife most devotedly loved and loving, the ordinary amusements of life had no attractions for him.

In a direct line from Flaxman we find M. L. Watson (b. 1804, d. 1847), a man of whom the public has heard little, and who, always suffering from bad health, died young, but who was a sculptor of most undoubted talent. His colossal group of *Lords Eldon and Stowell*, at Oxford, is one of the finest monumental works we can boast, and his bas-relief, *Sleep and Death carrying away the Dead Body of Sarpedon*, one of the best works English sculpture has produced. Previous to his death, he saw with his own eyes every model and unfinished work destroyed, so that nothing might be left behind him on which he had not exerted his utmost skill, or might be unworthy of his name. I shall always remember the circumstance as related to me by an eye-witness, of the dying sculptor wrapped in blankets and propped up with pillows while his men held his models one by one before him, indicating with feeble hands which he wanted saved and which shattered.

John Gibson, R.A. (b. 1790, d. 1866), resided during almost his entire life in Rome, but his works may be sufficiently studied here, for he bequeathed a large collection of casts and a fund of money for their preservation to the Royal Academy. He repeatedly said that "the desire for novelty destroys pure taste; what is novel diverts us; truth and beauty instruct us," and this axiom sufficiently explains his pseudo-classic statues, little else than inferior imitations of the antique.

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*A Hunter with his Dog* and *Jason* are the best examples of his style, but his most important works are the *Tomb of Clement VII* in St. Peter's, Rome, and a colossal statue of *Queen Victoria* seated between two standing figures, which represent *Justice* and *Mercy*, in the Houses of Parliament. Gibson's career is more fully treated in another chapter.

By far the most pecuniarily successful man in the profession was Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A., a sculptor who devoted his great talents almost entirely to portraiture. Originally a wood-carver, he gained for himself both name and fortune. His busts are distinguished for breadth of modelling, dignity, and *morbidezza* in the rendering of flesh and drapery, but his treatment of hair is mannered. Nearly everybody of eminence in his day sat to Chantrey. His noble statue of *Watts* is badly placed in a small side chapel in Westminster Abbey; it would be difficult to name a work more distinguished for breadth and dignity of expression. The great inventor looks as if he could sit there and meditate in calm repose for ever. Every great monumental work should, I think, express rest—the life-work done, repose achieved. Besides, action interferes with dignity, and we cannot examine with such profound attention a figure which the next moment would see move were it alive, as we can one which, like Donatello's *St. George*, looks as if it could stand in the same attitude for hours.

Chantrey's *Sleeping Children*, in Lichfield Cathedral, is perhaps his most popularly admired work.

Behnes (died 1864) excelled in portrait sculp-

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

ture. His bust of *Queen Victoria* when a child is one of the finest representations of childhood in marble. Of his statues may be mentioned *Sir William Follett*, and *Dr. Bell* in Westminster Abbey, and *Major-General Sir T. Jones* and *Dr. Babington* in St. Paul's.

E. H. Baily, R.A. (b. 1788, d. 1867), was the friend and assistant of Flaxman. He derived his style less from the antique than from nature, and his *Eve at the Fountain* gained him a very wide reputation. But his chief works were portrait statues and busts, of which his *Charles James Fox* and *Lord Mansfield* in St. Stephen's Hall may be taken as examples.

R. J. Wyatt (b. 1795, d. 1850) was invited by Canova to Rome, and finally adopted that city as his home. His *Flora*, *Nymphs*, *Penelope*, and *Musidora* may be cited as the best works of an artist of whom Redgrave remarks that "he attained great purity and finish; his compositions were marked by their harmony and beauty of line, combined with great truth and nature."

Sir Richard Westmacott, R.A. (b. 1775, d. 1856), was another of our sculptors who studied in Rome. He executed several statues for St. Paul's, one of *Nelson* for the Liverpool Exchange, of *Lord Erskine* for Lincoln's Inn, and many other works, all distinguished by a certain grandeur of proportion but wanting in individuality.

Henry Weekes, R.A. (b. 1809, d. 1877), was the pupil and friend of Chantrey, and replaced him when he died as a sculptor of portrait busts. Two fine specimens of his work stand in the National Gallery of British Art—busts of *Stothard* and *Mulready* the painters. They mark the culmina-



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tion of Weeke's art; as age advanced his works became less powerful in execution. He also produced some ideal figures; his *Sardanapalus* raising a wine cup high above his head, a female figure called *The Naturalist* and *A Mother and Child* take high rank among English works of imaginative art.

It may be worth while to remark that the three best modellers of portrait busts England has produced, viz., Chantrey, Behnes, and Weekes did not study in the classic school of Rome.

J. H. Foley, R.A. (b. 1818, d. 1874), excelled in portrait statues, many of which are equestrian. His bronze equestrian statues of *Outram* and of *Lord Hardinge* are in India, which opulent country possesses many of the finest examples of sculpture produced in England. His colossal sitting statue of the *Prince Consort* in Hyde Park is familiar to most of us, and all may inspect the noble marble figure of the chivalrous *Lord Falkland* in the Houses of Parliament; where, by the way, is a fine collection of statues accessible to the public. In front of Trinity College, Dublin, Foley's statue of *Goldsmith* attracts universal admiration for its unaffected and masterly treatment. Being of bronze, the support at the side, indispensable to a marble or stone figure, is done away with—a manifest gain in lightness and naturalness. The same city boasts his magnificent *Daniel O'Connell*. I had almost omitted his charming ideal group in marble, *Ino and Bacchus* and *the Youth at the Stream*, because Foley's portrait statues are infinitely superior to his works of imagination.

Alfred Stevens occupies a unique position in the annals of British sculpture, for he alone seems to have gone back to the artists of the Italian Re-



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naissance in search of inspiration. We have the result in his *Monument to the Duke of Wellington* in St. Paul's Cathedral, and whatever may be our opinion as to the taste of putting an equestrian statue over the dead recumbent figure below, none can deny the vigour and originality of the whole work. The sarcophagus is a masterpiece of delicate invention and elegance, and reminds us forcibly of the beautiful arabesques with which Mino da Fiesole adorned his superb monuments. The figures he has placed at the corners are hardly so satisfactory, their violence of action somewhat detracting perhaps from the repose necessary to a sepulchral subject. Be this as it may, the monument is unique in English art.

At Dorchester House, Park Lane, are some magnificent masterpieces executed by Stevens. The finest consists of two crouching female figures in white marble, on a mantelpiece, modelled and carved with all the truth and delicacy of which the art is capable. There is a suggestion of the influence of Michelangelo in the compact attitudes and superb strength of the limbs; the figures are perfect in style, and no English artist but Stevens was capable of a work of such supreme sincerity and freedom at the date of their production.

Other British sculptors were Patrick McDowell, John Thomas who combined sculpture with architecture, Spence, Thornycroft, Lough, Noble, Theed, Philip, and E. B. Stephens.

Sir Edwin Landseer (died 1873), though a painter, shows great knowledge of the resources of the sculptor's material in his colossal *Lions*. The attitude of the animals is noble, the modelling large, and the outlines simple and grand.

ALFRED STEVENS



*W. A. Mansell & Co. photo*

*[Dorchester House]*

DECORATIVE FIGURE



## BRITISH SCULPTURE

Another painter, George Frederick Watts (1817-1904), executed some of the finest works of sculpture that England in the last century can boast. His *Hugh Lupus Grosvenor*, an equestrian statue in bronze, his *Energy*, erected at Cape Town as a monument to Cecil Rhodes, and his colossal bust of *Clytie* will recur to the memory of any one interested in art. In them is the true spirit of the antique, but no works can be further from the mere copying the masterpieces of antiquity.

Among works of sculpture by painters those of Lord Leighton (d. 1896) are distinguished by their decided return to the principles of the antique, also the predominating note of his paintings. Like a Greek born out of due time, his genius was fired only by the thought and spirit of the people he admired, hence his appeal to modernity is weak and fleeting, notwithstanding the beauty and skill of his productions.

We are not entitled to add the name of Sir Edgar Boehm (1834-1890) to the list of British sculptors as he was a German, nor would it lend additional lustre to the record.

The Italian, Baron Marochetti (1805-1868), lived and worked for some time in London, and has left us two of the finest monuments we possess—the *Richard Cœur-de-Lion* at Westminster and the *Monument to Lord Melbourne* in St. Paul's. The vigorous modelling, truth, and grandeur of the first virile conception contrast well with the tender grace of the two angels who, with folded wings, watch the door of the sepulchre in the latter work.

A study of the lives of British sculptors urges the question upon us as to how far persistent study of the antique, both at home and abroad, is re-



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sponsible for our mediocrity in the art of monumental sculpture, the want of study of nature, of originality, of style, which stamps our work? We have seen that most of the English sculptors who have made names for themselves, such as Banks, Flaxman, Gibson, Baily, Wyatt, Westmacott, and others, pursued at least their initial studies in Rome, where none may escape the all-powerful influence of classic sculpture; we also know that the Italian artists to whom we owe the Renaissance of this art lived before the Greek masterpieces were unearthed; and that the modern French, successful, though not in comparison with the former school, have drawn their inspiration entirely from nature. Indeed, in the classes of Paris to-day, the study of the antique is almost completely ignored. Such being the case, would it not be well for us to reconsider our position, alter the curriculum which insists on two years' training from the antique alone, and replace it by continual study of the living model?

That British sculptors have produced some good imaginative work, and the finest portrait busts since the Graeco-Roman period, renders their want of ability in the execution of outdoor statues and monuments the more inexplicable. Berlin may indeed be proud of her monument to *Frederick the Great* by Rauch, and Denmark congratulate herself on possessing the *Danske Landsoldat* of Bissen. Mainz has her *Guttenburg*, Antwerp her *Rubens*, Paris many good memorial statues, but to what monument in London can we point with pride or even satisfaction?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A diligent observer has counted eighty-seven portrait statues in London, from the Achilles in Hyde Park to Irving behind the National Gallery.—*Daily Chronicle*.

# BRITISH SCULPTURE

## SCULPTURE IN THE TATE GALLERY

### (NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART)

"Among the most pathetic figures in the world," says Mr. Witt, in his "How to Look at Pictures," "must be counted the men and women who may be seen in any picture-gallery slowly circumambulating the four walls, with eyes fixed upon catalogue or guide-book, only looking up at intervals to ensure that they are standing before the right picture." If, however, the author had been visiting a gallery of sculpture instead of painting, he would have become aware of *the* most pathetic figures of all—men and women passing by the finest works in marble and bronze, without so much as turning over the leaves of catalogue or guide-book to see what they represent or who created them. Such objects as trees, water, animals, portraits, and *genre* subjects, they are familiar with, and are pleased to recognize in their pictorial reproduction, but not one person in twenty cares for or understands the perfection of colourless form. To the majority of people a sculpture-gallery is a place of meeting, of gossip, of repose after the fatigue of looking at pictures. If modern sculpture has no attraction for them, antique sculpture is still less suited to their capacities, for the appeal of painting is alluring to the senses, facile, insistent; that of sculpture calm, cold, and intellectual.

These considerations were impressed upon me for the hundredth time during a recent visit to the Tate Gallery where there is a small but interesting collection of British sculpture. The rooms of paintings were crowded with visitors, from connoisseurs with noses close to the canvas, to boys

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in search of fun and frolic; but the Sculpture Gallery was abandoned to silent solitude, or only used as a passage from one gallery of pictures to another.

In the Central Hall are four statues of artists, two of which are of great merit, that of *Flaxman*, by Weekes, and that of *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, by Foley. It might, perhaps, be objected to the Flaxman that the expression of the whole figure is too despondent, and that if Sir Joshua's palette were larger it would improve the composition and give the figure a more workmanlike appearance, but this is hypercriticism of what are probably the best portrait statues in London.

The large busts of *Mulready* and *Stothard* by Weekes, formerly in the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, are fine examples of the artist and serve to illustrate my previous remarks as to his style of work, always reminiscent of his master, Chantrey. The relief by Banks, *Thetis and her Nymphs rising from the Sea to console Achilles*, is too high in relief, according to the canon set by the greatest Greeks and acquiesced in by the *cinque cento* sculptors. The art of modelling in relief is far more difficult than that of modelling in the round, demanding, as it does, perfect draughtsmanship, united to a keen sense of values and perspective.

No more apt illustration of my criticism on Gibson's work could possibly be found than his group, *Hylas and the Water-Nymphs*. Here we have the artist's determined choice of a classical subject, carried out in as classical a manner as his talent could achieve; added to this is perfect knowledge of the management of his material.



## BRITISH SCULPTURE

But, notwithstanding, the lay spectator is quite reasonably left cold and uninterested, while the artist turns for relief to genuine works of the ancient Greeks. These pseudo-classicalities born out of due time are mere ghosts, and have the appearance of having been produced according to rule by clever Italian carvers. The imitators of the Greeks have much to answer for in the neglect of sculpture, for which their works create a positive distaste.

Lord Leighton's two bronzes, *The Sluggard* and *An Athlete struggling with a Python*, avowedly classical in composition and execution, have a much closer affinity to Greek work than the Gibson group; the inspiration of the artist was true and innate, not fictitious or assumed. The figures are not lofty in sentiment, the rendering of physical, not intellectual perfection being the artist's object, but they are well composed and modelled. The sculptor has insisted too strongly on showing his anatomical knowledge, the veins of the feet in particular are too swollen, and the muscles too turgid even for the violent actions of both figures, actions chosen, perhaps, for this particular display. The little *Sketch for the Athlete*, placed near the bronze statue, in which these details are not so vigorously marked, is like most sketches I have seen, more suggestive, and therefore more artistic.

Calder Marshall's *Prodigal Son* seems meant to portray the meagreness characteristic of the subject; but the sculptor has only succeeded in representing the mean meagreness of the street Arab, not the picturesque attenuation of the ascetic sons of the desert.



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

*Pandora*, by Bates, is a prettily-conceived figure, and the attitude graceful, but too smooth in workmanship, and the simplicity of the modelling verges on emptiness. His *Hounds in Leash* is a far more virile work, though the subject is not one that would commend itself to every one.

Watt's heroic bust of *Clytie* is, like all that great painter's work, very grandly conceived. The turn of the head and the modelling of the neck where it joins the hair are admirable, but it is somewhat forced in action, and the shoulders seem too colossal for the front of the figure, which has all the delicacy of form of a young girl.

The student who would care to trace the birth of an idea in the mind of an artist, has an excellent opportunity of doing so by studying the collection of drawings by Alfred Stevens in this gallery. In them the imagination of the man runs riot, while his hand is tentative yet skilful, and we are reminded of similar works by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. As might be expected from his portrait, so closely resembling in character some of the early Italian masters, his works are conscientious and full of feeling. In contrast to the rough drawings, which are simply suggestions or records of ideas, hangs the *Head of a Dead Child*, the high finish of which shows immense capacity and knowledge of detail, besides giving, with absolute truth, the impression of death. The versatility of Stevens is shown by two oil paintings here, one, the *Head of a Man*, very reminiscent of the Venetian masters, the other, *King Alfred and his Mother*, recalling the Madonnas of Raffael.

His *Isaiah* seems to me too like the frescoes of

## BRITISH SCULPTURE

Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel to be reckoned a work of great genius; and here again, if one turns to the sketch for the angel in this picture, it is at once seen to be infinitely superior to the finished composition, the poise of the head is more graceful, the features more refined.

The two sketch models of *Valour and Cowardice* and *Truth and Falsehood*, for the Wellington Monument in St. Paul's, are even more vigorous and forcible than the finished work.

It is true that Stevens worked under Thorvaldsen, and called him his only master; his best inspiration, however, came from the great artists of the Renaissance in Italy, and, above all, from Michelangelo.

## CHAPTER IX

### FRENCH SCULPTURE

AT the risk of repetition I wish to point out that it is by no means the object of this book to give a history of the art of sculpture; many and able are the pens which have already done so: the writer can sit in his own library and do excellent work in this direction. Therefore in the few sketches of artists and their works which follow, only just sufficient matter to illustrate my previous remarks will be found.

Nor do I wish to dictate to the reader what to like and what to avoid, but to give him principles to assist his judgement, and if he is so happy as to be born with taste enough to know intuitively what is good, to give him, in my informal way, the reasons why he does so. That many people, excellent critics also, will differ from my conclusions I am well aware, but *suum cuique*. "To know what you prefer," said Stevenson, "instead of humbly saying 'Amen' to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive."

As I pursue my inquiries into the facts concerning sculpture and sculptors, I am struck with the paucity of the material except of that which, interesting to *litterati*, concerns Greek and Roman

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sculpture. Dictionaries of painters abound, but the authoritative dictionary of sculptors is yet to be written. Palaces are built to enshrine the more attractive and popular productions of artists in colour, but the neglected worker in stone and metal has yet to find a gallery in London worthy of the name, for the exhibition of the creations of his genius and labour.

It is a truism, that he who would study a work of art thoroughly, must first try to penetrate the thought of the artist, and then ask himself how far he has been successful in realizing it; thus the student will be able to gauge the artist's power of expression. The perfect work of art should be, besides expressive of thought and suggestion, carried out with all the skill at the artist's command in whatever material he uses as his medium. Of course a good idea, imperfectly expressed for want of technical knowledge or because of the immaturity of the art, is far higher in its appeal than execution perfected with all the twentieth century's appliances, and with no thought behind its elaborate vacuity.

It may perhaps be asked why I refer to the imitation of Greek sculpture as a subject of reproof, since I have extolled that art, as it deserves, far above all others. It is because any imitation is a mistake; with Greek life and Greek religion, their art also died, and the corpse, under the different conditions of modern life, cannot be resuscitated. All such attempts must end in disaster, as we see in the cases of Gibson and Canova; we have no use for modern repetitions of Jupiters, Apollos, Dianas, Venuses, and the other celebrated personages of the mythological



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Olympia. The strength of the great humanistic sculptors lay in the fact that they created their art themselves in order to express the dominant sentiments of the age in which they moved and had their being.

French artists early attained distinction in architectural sculpture, witness the noble cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens, Rouen, and many another glorious building elevated by them into veritable shrines of art.

The Renaissance of the art of sculpture due to the genius of the illustrious Italian artists in the thirteenth century, naturally influenced France before the movement reached our further shores. The triumphant armies of Louis XII and Francis I. "came back from Italy with the wonders of the South upon their lips and her treasures in their hands. They brought with them armour inlaid with precious metals, embroidered clothing, and even household furniture. Distributed by many hands in many different places, each precious thing became a separate centre of imitative power. The *châteaux* of the country nobles boasted the treasures which had fallen to the share of their lords at Genoa or at Naples; and the great women of the court were eager to divide the spoil. The contagion spread rapidly. Even in the most fantastic moment of Gothic inspiration, the French artist gave evidence that his right hand obeyed a national instinct for order, for balance, for completeness, and that his eye preferred, in obedience to a national predilection, the most refined harmonies of colour. Step by step he had been feeling his way; now the broken link of tradition was again made fast; the workmen of

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Paris and the workmen of Athens joined hands, united by the genius of Italy."<sup>1</sup>

Michel Colombe (1431-1514) and his contemporaries, Jean Texier and Jean Juste, were the only noteworthy predecessors of Jean Goujon (1530-1572) who is the typical sculptor of the French Renaissance. He worked on the Church of St. Maclou and Rouen Cathedral, and afterwards went to Ecouen where he perfected himself in his profession. His next work was the *Caryatides* in the Louvre, serious and dignified figures which have been as highly praised by some critics as they have been condemned by others. His masterpiece is the *Diana* which exemplifies all the faults and all the beauties of his style. The *torso* is well modelled but like the limbs, attenuated, the arrangement of the hair is affected and incompatible with the character of the divine huntress, but not perhaps with that of Diane de Poitiers whom the statue has been traditionally supposed to represent. The *Fountain of the Innocents*, Paris, is one of his best works. In the Salle Goujon in the Louvre are preserved five reliefs by him, a *Deposition from the Cross*, and the *Four Evangelists*, excellently modelled in true bas-relief style, and conceived with great imagination.

The greatest genius though not the most versatile artist of this epoch was Germain Pilon (1515?-1590). He executed a number of monuments, most of which are at the Church of St. Denis; that of *René Birague and his Wife* is in the Louvre. But the work by which he is best known is the celebrated group of the *Three Graces*, female figures

<sup>1</sup> "The Renaissance of Art in France."—MRS. MARK PATTISON (Lady Dilke).

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

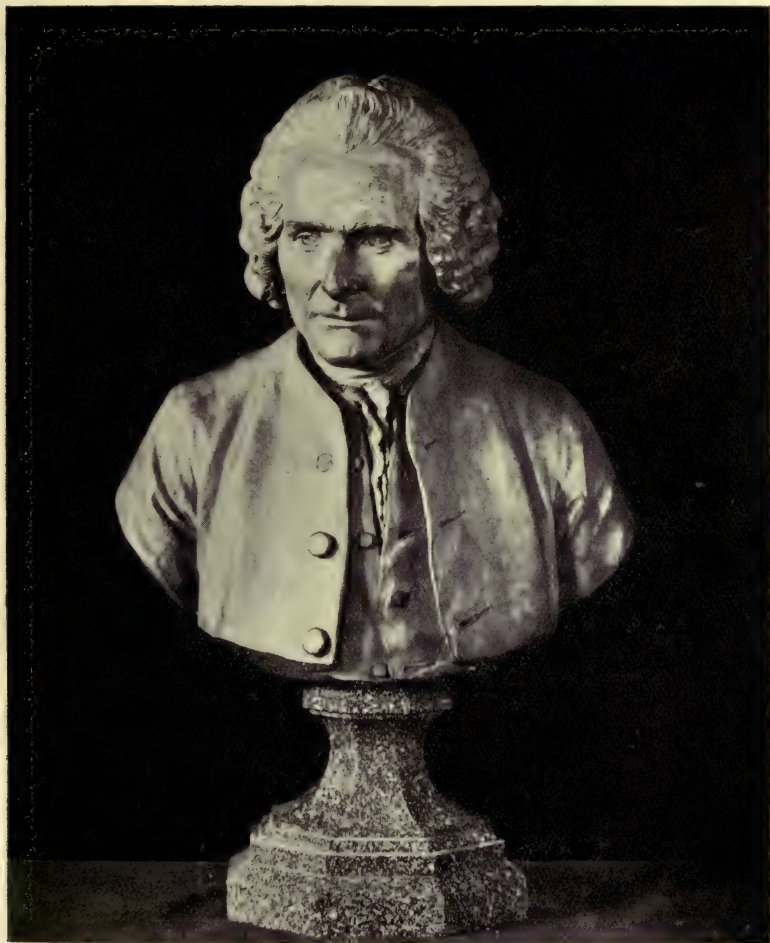
standing back to back, clasping each other's hands, which originally bore an urn containing the hearts of Henri II and Catherine de Medici. Equally artificial with Jean Goujon's *Diana*, these figures are yet more perfect specimens of womanhood, but their affected pose and meretricious grace adapt them better to support a flower vase or a lamp, than to bear the ghastly burden of a monarch's heart. "'Gratiae decentes' is the quotation perpetually applied to these figures," says Lady Dilke, and she adds most convincingly, "they are the highly artificial rendering of a highly artificial product. Both attitude and expression are cultivated, polished, finished, but without truth, without simplicity, without honesty."

The works of the sculptors who succeeded these two towering figures call for no remark here; as they had no immediate predecessors so they left no one worthy to succeed them.

It would be interesting to inquire why the Renaissance of sculpture, flourishing supremely in Italy till it culminated in the sublimity of Michelangelo and the tender realism of Donatello, should have produced no better result in France than the affectation of Pilon's *Graces*, the artificiality of Goujon's *Diane Chasseresse*, and the production of a few monumental works. The cause lies probably in the fact that the Renaissance in Italy sprang spontaneously from the hearts and thoughts of that eminently artistic race, while the movement was simply transplanted to France, and there reaching at once an artificial stature, soon drooped and died like a plant on a foreign soil. Amid the corruption of the French court and church, artists were oblivious of the high mission of art. As



HOUDON



TERRA-COTTA BUST OF ROUSSEAU  
(THE PROPERTY OF MR. E. M. HODGKINS)





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Holman Hunt said, speaking of another but less important Renaissance, "The purpose of art is, in the love of guileless beauty, to lead man to distinguish between that which, being clean in spirit, is productive of virtue, and that which is flaunting and meretricious and productive of ruin to a nation." Such sentiments were utterly foreign and impossible to the French artists of the fifteenth century, and the tale of their degeneracy is clearly told in the works of art they have left behind them.

The work of the early sculptors of the French Renaissance was theatrical in design and false in sentiment, yet amazingly clever in execution. But a better period was approaching.

During the interval which followed the death of Pilon no artist of eminence appeared in France, when suddenly a master arose in the person of Jean Antoine Houdon (1741-1828), who carried the art of sculpture to a perfection which in modern days it has seldom reached. Throwing aside the florid, artificial, and meretricious style of the artists who laboured before him, he returned to the sane, pure, and true traditions of the ancient Greeks, and to this he added a profound study of nature—for these two, let it never be forgotten, must ever go hand in hand. He was the sculptor of the celebrated *Statue of Voltaire* in the Théâtre Français; he seems to have caught the very spirit of the cynical old philosopher as, seated, and placing both hands on the arms of his chair, he darts his piercing gaze into futurity. It is life itself, Voltaire is himself before us; indeed, all Houdon's works are instinct with vitality. His *Bust of Rousseau* is beyond all praise for its truth and vigour. Even more impressive than his por-

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

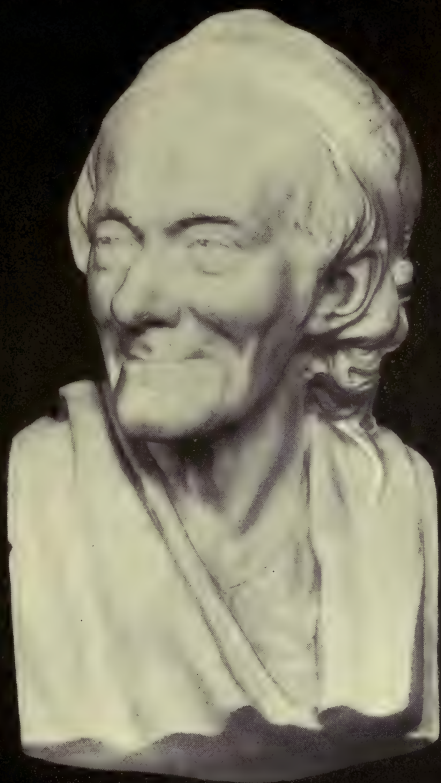
traits is the noble colossal statue of *S. Bruno* in Sta Maria degli Angeli, Rome. A statue of *Molière* and a nude bronze *Diana* are his other best-known works, except perhaps the celebrated *Ecorché Figure* used in every academy and art school in the world. Houdon succeeded in giving to his subjects a general impression of truth and life without slavishly copying nature, or imitating the antique—indeed, his work resembles some of the best Graeco-Roman busts, except in the workmanship of the hair, a difficult subject in which Houdon is skilful beyond all praise, and the antique sculptors were not. Breadth and vitality are the noble characteristics of his work.

Pierre Puget (d. 1697) was a most decided follower of Bernini; carefully finished as they are, his works are exaggerated, superficial, and unsculpturesque.

The fatal influence of Bernini is also apparent in the style of Baptiste Pigalle (d. 1785). The huge *Monument of Marshal Moritz of Saxony*, which fills one side of the choir of the Church of St. Thomas at Strasburg, is pictorial and theatrical, faults which no skill in carving or modelling can redeem. I have, however, seen some *Cupids* modelled by him in a masterly style, which prove that when the Neapolitan's influence was less felt, Pigalle was really a master of his art.

Charles Antoine Coysevox (d. 1720), though tainted with the affectation of the period in which he lived, modelled with more simplicity and truth than many other sculptors of his epoch. His largest work is the *Monument of Cardinal Mazarin*, which is excellent in design and masterly in execution; his busts, in which branch of sculpture he

HOUDON



MARBLE BUST OF VOLTAIRE  
(THE PROPERTY OF MR. E. M. HODGKINS)





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excelled, of *Bossuet*, *Lebrun*, *Mignard*, and *Marie Serre*, are truthful, noble, and characteristic, though their effect as works of art is somewhat injured by the wigs with which the fashion of the day obliged him to invest them. His *Nymph with a Shell* is a well-composed figure, far richer in artistic qualities than any work of either Gibson or Canova.

The French Revolution marks the commencement of another impulse in the art of sculpture; in place of the deification of monarchs and of inane allegories, sculptors began to represent ideas, and to study nature sincerely in order that they might do so worthily. Perfect in technical skill, James Pradier (1792-1852) excelled in the representation of female beauty. His *Phryne*, *Psyche*, *Atalanta*, and *Sappho* are gems to be found in every plaster-shop, and the grand *Caryatides* which surround the tomb of the Emperor Napoleon at the Invalides are proofs of his capacity as a sculptor of colossal works.

P. H. Lemaire (b. 1798) also reverted to the classic school, with the result which may be seen in the great relief of the *Pediment of the Madeleine*.

François Rude (1784-1855) was one of the most excellent of the sculptors of the period who united the severity of the classic style with the sincere study of nature. His bronze *Mercury* in the Louvre, *Neapolitan Fisherman*, and *Maid of Orleans*, are excellent in design, and most ably executed, but he was not successful in the *Reliefs for the Arc de l'Etoile*, which are confused and theatrical.

David d'Angers (1789-1856) pursued a naturalistic style, and succeeded in avoiding that con-

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

ventionality which has been the downfall of so many artists. He modelled busts of nearly all the celebrated men of his time, which are excellent in style and execution. The *Relief on the Pediment of the Pantheon* in Paris is by him; his most successful work is the *Guttenburg Memorial* at Strasburg.

Of the school of David d'Angers was A. E. Barye (1795-1875), unequalled as a sculptor of animals by any artist in the same branch of art.

Henri Michel Antoine Chapu (1833-1891) was the sculptor of the well-known *Joan of Arc at Domrèmy*, a figure which, by its originality and simplicity, quickly attracted public attention and became famous. *Statues of Queen Alexandra* and the *Dowager Empress of Russia* by him are in the Ny Glyptothek at Copenhagen, both very charming in pose and sound in execution. In these works the sculptor has cleverly reconciled modern costume with the exigences of art.

With Chapu I end my list, though it is far from including all the celebrated sculptors of France.

In conclusion, Paris is strewn with sculptured monuments, each more or less distinguished by cleverness or genius, and the best modern school of sculpture is the French.

CHAPU



[Copenhagen]

JOAN OF ARC AT DOMRÉMY





## CHAPTER X

### GERMAN AND FLEMISH SCULPTURE

**I**N a history of sculpture it would be necessary to devote some time to the study of the old bronze workers of Nuremberg, Innspruck, etc., who have made their names perennially famous. But as this book professes to be a guide to taste and not a history, we need not dwell long on a vast and difficult subject except in the aspect which concerns that aim.

The art of sculpture properly so called, is a pure product of the south of Europe. In colour and execution northern artists have excelled; witness the glorious master pieces of Holland and the Netherlands and the not less splendid productions of our own school in the days of Reynolds and Turner. But for equally perfect sculpture we must turn to the south.

In 1391 a Flemish master, Jacques de Baerze and a Netherland sculptor, Claus Sluter, executed those marvellous Gothic *Tombs of Jean Sans Peur* and of *Philippe le Hardi*, Dukes of Burgundy, which now form the greatest treasures of the Museum at Dijon.

About this period the *Tombs of Charles the Bold* and of *Marie of Burgundy*, his daughter, works far in advance of others of the same date, were

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produced in Bruges. In this town too, may be seen a fine specimen of wood-carving by Herman Glosencamp, *The Chimney-piece of the Assize Courts*; there is another nearly as fine, by Launcelot Blondeel of Bruges in the Palais de Justice.

In the early part of the fourteenth century a school of workers in copper arose, whose productions were known as *dinanderie*, or *dinanterie*, from Dinant, the town in which they lived. Their colonies and workshops spread in many Belgian towns, notably at Louvain, St. Trond, Mechlin, and Brussels.

German artists first made use of wood as a vehicle for their ideas. The art of wood-carving was carried to the highest perfection it attained by Veit Stoss who, the Poles assert, was born in Cracow, but who, it has lately been proved, was a citizen of Nuremburg. His greatest achievement is the *High Altar of the Frauenkirche* at Cracow executed between the years 1472 and 1484. Michael Wohlgemuth, the master of Albert Dürer, executed several altars in a mixed style of sculpture and painting.

A decided advance in the art is seen in the work of Adam Krafft (c. 1430-1507). Little is to be ascertained as to his life, but his first and best known work is the *Seven Stages of the Cross*, on the road leading to the Cemetery of St. John at Nuremburg. "They are crowded compositions in strong relief, much injured and partially restored, nevertheless thrilling in effect from their power and depths of feeling. One of the finest is the third, in which Christ is uttering the warning words to the mourning women, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and

## GERMAN AND FLEMISH SCULPTURE

for your children.' Everything in this scene is full of profound emotion and dramatic expression."<sup>1</sup>

Krafft's next works were the extensive reliefs on *Schreyer's Monument* in the choir of the Church of St. Sebald, Nuremberg, and the *Sacramentarium*, sixty-four feet high, called his masterpiece, in that of St. Laurence. In the latter work three life-size figures are introduced, full of character, skilful in technique.

Destree, in his recent work on "The Renaissance of Sculpture in Belgium," calls the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the golden age of sculpture in the Netherlands. "Not only do we find municipal buildings and cathedrals arising throughout Belgium, not only do we see these adorned with reredos, tabernacle, rood-screen and monuments by native artists, but we hear of these same artists in all great foreign centres. They were employed at Dijon, Rouen, and Brou, and also in Germany, Bohemia, Denmark, and even so far afield as Sweden. We trace them also in Spain."

One of the greatest masters of German art, Peter Vischer (d. 1529), carried bronze casting to its highest perfection. His early works betray no acquaintance with Italian sculpture, but his son Herman visited Italy, and on his return thence, brought with him casts and drawings which materially influenced Vischer's style. Ten years of his life were spent in the execution of the *Shrine of St. Sebald* at Nuremberg. The architectural design is Gothic and it is adorned with beautifully executed statues and reliefs. "Never has a work of German sculpture" remarks Dr. Lübke, "combined the beauty of the south with the deep feel-

<sup>1</sup> "History of Sculpture."—DR. WILLIAM LÜBKE.



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

ing of the north more richly, more thoughtfully, and more harmoniously."

The genius of Peter Vischer, together with his study of Italian art, taught him to correct the mannerisms of the older craftsmen who modelled their figures about six heads in height; he gave them the more elegant and true proportion of from seven to seven and a half heads. He also simplified the treatment of drapery, and avoided the hard angles of the folds which seemed to characterize art in its immaturity. The noble figures of the Apostles in his great shrine are worthy to be ranked with the figures with which Ghiberti enriched the bronze doors of the Baptistery at Florence, but the German was no servile imitator of the great Italian, a true northern feeling penetrates all his work.

As bronze founders, Peter Vischer and his school are world famous for their masterly command of their material.

The beginning of the sixteenth century marks the date of the commencement of the *Emperor Maximilian's Monument* in the Palace Church at Innsbruck. It is probably one of the finest memorials ever erected to the glorification of a prince. A colossal marble sarcophagus erected in the middle of the church is surrounded by twenty-eight bronze statues of famous heroes or relatives of the Imperial House of Austria. The most beautiful of these are the figures of *King Arthur*, who seems "moulded in colossal calm," said to be by P. Vischer, and of *Theodoric the Goth*, possibly by the same hand.

Even in a brief analysis such as this, mention must be made of Francis Duquesnoy (1594-1644)

PETER VISCHER



*[Innsbruck]*

STATUE OF KING ARTHUR  
(FROM THE TOMB OF THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN)



## GERMAN AND FLEMISH SCULPTURE

called "Il Fiammingo," who is unrivalled in the representation of children. No sculptor before or since, has been equally successful in rendering the proportions, *morbidezza* of the flesh, and the playful actions of infancy. His *Sta Susanna* in the Church of Sta Maria di Loreto in Rome is a good specimen of modern classical sculpture, and his *St. Andrew* in St. Peter's is one of the best statues there.

The Thirty Years' War and the religious confusion caused by the Reformation may be assigned as the causes why German art at this period ceased to be productive of great works.

In studying the achievements of the early German masters, one seems already to detect the genesis of the style which characterizes the art of that nation even to our own day. There is evident sincerity of purpose, but always a certain stiffness or frigidity of style; accuracy and truth, but no softness of sentiment; matter of fact realism, but no suggestive qualities. In losing the archaism of Peter Vischer they also lost his admirable feeling and power of expression.

Since the date of the Emperor Maximilian's tomb, Germany has produced numerous sculptors who have erected the necessary monuments to its great men and enriched their country with many ideal works which more or less recall the antique. But this work is all so level in quality, so mechanical, that the eye would perhaps welcome an error of which genius might be guilty. Schadow, Tieck, Rauch (whose monument to Frederick the Great in Berlin is one of the finest works of its kind in Europe), Drake, A. Wolff, Kiss of *Amazon* fame, Dannecker the author of the celebrated



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

*Ariadne*, Rietchel, Von Bandel, Schilling and Schwanthaler, have done steady, honest work, but there is no spark of the divine fire in any one of them, no inspiration like that of the Italians of the Renaissance, or of the great bronze-workers of their own Nuremburg.

## CHAPTER XI

### SPANISH SCULPTURE

TO the student in search of the sublime beauty of the Greek, or of the sincerity and purity of Italian Renaissance art, Spanish sculpture, apart from any historical interest it may possess, is an almost negligible quantity. Ford hazards the astounding assertion that it "has never been properly appreciated," and that it has "at least as much importance as Spanish painting!" However, he was certainly not an artist, and could not have realized the superb positions of Velasquez and Murillo in the sister art.

"If Spain has won a supreme position in the art of painting, in that of sculpture she has neither obtained nor deserved pre-eminence. To the neglect of the permanent materials of sculpture, such as bronze and marble, the Spanish sculptor wrought his figures in wood or in equally perishable terracotta, offering little resistance to the hand of time. These materials he painted over the colour of life, to suit the taste of the ignorant populace or vulgar clergy, with the result that his work was startling but never perfect or even artistic."<sup>1</sup>

In architecture the Spaniards possessed re-

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, the greatest authority on this subject.

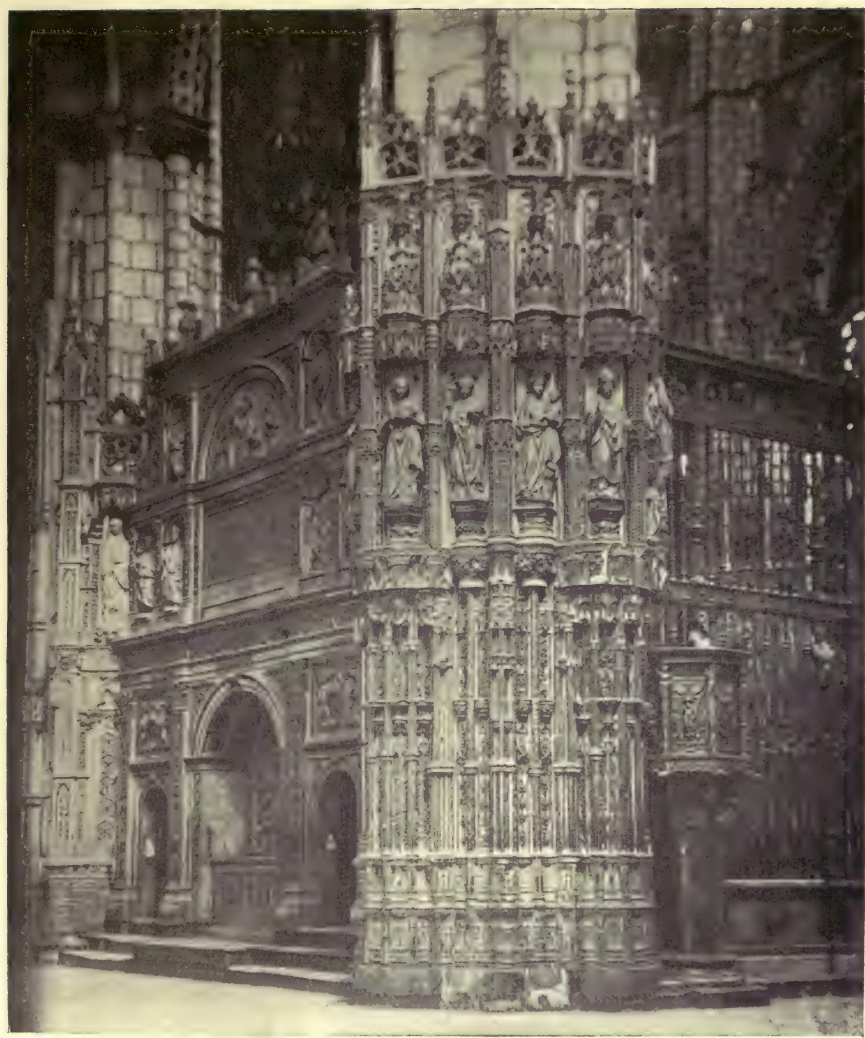
## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

markable skill, and also in the florid ornament and expressive figures with which they adorned their magnificent buildings. Their coros and altars are marvellous specimens of ability in this direction, but they have never produced a separate statue or group worthy to be reckoned among the great works of the kind by artists of other nations.

From Berruguete onwards Italian influence pervaded Spanish sculpture. When this artist returned from studying in Rome and Florence after Michelangelo and the antique, he brought with him the canons of Italian art, and his principles were followed by most of the artists of Spain who have attained eminence. These men united in their own persons the three arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, and to their familiarity with colour I cannot but attribute the detestable fashion of painting their statues.

When wood was employed, it was sometimes covered with canvas on which the colour was laid; real draperies and wigs were also used. In some cases only the heads and extremities were finished, the rest being often left a mere block. Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell's words on this subject may serve as a precept to the reader besides illustrating my remarks. "But," he says, in his "Annals of the Artists of Spain," "it is the business of the sculptor to deal with form alone, to mould the clay into beauty, and to breathe life into the colourless marble; as it is the business of the painter to deal with colour. Neither sculpture nor painting can invade the province of the other without loss and a sacrifice of the dignity of art, for which no illusion, however perfect, can recompense."

When in Spain, my impression of these pro-



THE CAPILLA MAYOR  
(TOLEDO CATHEDRAL)





## SPANISH SCULPTURE

ductions was that in the places for which they were designed they were certainly effective, and that in expression and modelling they are often admirable, but that they do not reach the standard of great works of art. Here is a description of typical Spanish religious sculpture, written on the spot and taken from my diary:

"The Church of St. Nicolas della Villa in Cordoba is particularly rich in religious figures. I cannot deny them a certain amount of expression, and having said that I will describe them. There are figures which are simply of wood coloured according to nature—the next step is to images clothed in real clothes and wearing real hair. They vary from life size to that of a medium size Dutch doll, and all are very Spanish in character. There is one group, the middle figure of which represents Jesus Christ sitting in a melancholy attitude, dripping with blood, and having hair reaching to the waist. On one side stands the Virgin, robed as a nun and holding a rich lace pocket-handkerchief; on the other, St. Joseph, dressed in the richest brocade. Another life-size figure represents the Virgin dressed in regal robes and crowned; and yet another, about eight inches high, is dressed in silver brocade. Many other saints, also in real costume, figure in this church.

"The retablos of the Cathedrals and Churches are huge masses of carved wood, heavily gilt and painted, in some places so as to imitate marble. At the Church of San Salvador in Seville is one in the worst imaginable taste. Gilt scrolls, piled up and projecting, are mingled with flying angels and cherubs painted the colour of life; below is a life-sized figure of Christ bearing a gilt cross,

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

wearing a velvet robe embroidered with gold, and with three (apparently) large gilt hair-pins stuck in his head."

The glorious Gothic tombs which enrich the cathedrals of Spain are, most of them, of foreign workmanship. Thus the wonderful *Chapel of the Condestable* in Burgos Cathedral is by John of Cologne, the *Sepulchre of the Infante Don Juan* in the Church of Santo Tomas at Avila, a masterpiece of Messer Domenico a Florentine sculptor, and the superb *Tomb of Ramon de Cordona* at Belping by John Nola, a Neapolitan.

In the twelfth century Master Mateo laid the foundations of Spanish architectural art, and his fine doorway of the Cathedral of Santiago may be studied from the cast in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. At Burgos, Toledo, Leon, Navarre, and Catalonia, important specimens of this style of sculpture may be found.

In 1408 the brothers Rodriguez ornamented the great portal of the Cathedral at Toledo (the *Puerta del Perdon*) with groups and figures, archaic in design but rich in effect.

Alonzo Berruguete (1480-1561), called the Spanish Michelangelo, studied in the school of that master in Florence. He was among the sculptors chosen by Bramante to model the Laocoon for the purpose of having it cast in bronze, a sufficient proof of his ability, though Sansovino gained the victory. After spending many years in Italy he returned to Spain, where he was soon engaged on numerous works. The finest are the *High Altar*, which he erected in the Church of S. Benito el Real, the *Sculptures in the Collegio Major* at Salamanca, the *Monuments of the Marquis and*



CHAPEL OF THE CONDESTABLE  
(BURGOS CATHEDRAL)





## SPANISH SCULPTURE

*Marchioness of Poza* at Palencia, and of the *Cardinal Archbishop Juan de Tavera*, which last was completed in his eightieth year. Berruguete is universally allowed to have been the greatest artist of his age in Spain.

Gaspar Becerra (1520-1570), also educated in Italy, executed the *High Altar of the Cathedral of Astorga*; his masterpiece is considered to be the *Statue of Our Lady of Solitude*, carved in wood for Queen Isabella de la Paz. He also wrote a "Book of Anatomy," which was published in Rome.

Juan Martinez Montanes (d. 1614), called, with Spanish hyperbole, the Pheidias of Seville, was employed in the cathedral of that city; on one of the side walls of the choir is an exquisite figure of the Virgin by him, the head of which is of remarkable beauty. *St. Dominic scourging himself* and a *Crucifixion* are in the Museum at Seville, the city in which he lived and died. According to Waagen, he was a sculptor of the highest rank.

Filipe de Vigarny was the renowned sculptor of the great *Monument of Ferdinand and Isabella* in the Chapel Royal at Granada. On a sarcophagus of Carrara marble, adorned with scrolls, bas-reliefs, and weeping cherubs, repose the two great Catholic sovereigns. On each side of the high altar kneel carved effigies of the same monarchs, remarkable as being exact representations, also attributed to this artist.

Juan de Juni (d. 1614) was educated, like most of his predecessors in the art of sculpture, in Italy; his first important work in his native country was the *High Altar* for the Church of Nuestra Senora de las Antiguas at Valladolid. It is of great size,

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

being fifty feet high and thirty wide, and provided with concealed staircases. It has the fault of extravagant distortion, for like that of all Spanish sculptors, his style is florid, mannered, and exaggerated, so much so that he has been called the Bernini of Spain. In a chapel to the right of this altar-piece is his theatrical *Virgen de los Cuchillos* so called from the seven swords piercing her breast. He executed a number of religious groups and retablos, the whole with such success that a recent critic has said of him: "Perhaps no modern sculptor has ever so nearly approached Michelangelo in genius; like him he wielded a fearless and furious chisel and delighted to dare every difficulty of attitude, and he loved to body forth energy and strong emotion rather than repose."

The fame of Castilian sculpture was maintained by Juni's successor, Gregorio Hernandez (1566-1614). Purer and more restrained in style than Juni, orders poured in upon him faster than he could execute them, and his works are to be found in most of the principal churches and convents of Valladolid, Santiago, Medina del Campo, Tudela, Plasencia, Salamanca, Avila, and Madrid.

Alonzo Cano (1601-1667) also, like the previous artists, combined the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, and excelled in the two first. He was largely employed in the convents of Seville and soon attained the first place amid the artists of Spain. "In the sacristy of the cathedral at Granada are several statuettes by him, the colouring of which, in the manner called by the Spaniards *estofado*, imparts the softness of enamel and is highly extolled."

Philip IV conferred the stall of a minor canon

## SPANISH SCULPTURE

upon Cano in his later years which, however, did not prevent his continuing his artistic career. A tale is told of him to the effect that he once received a commission to model a statue for which, when finished, he demanded a hundred doubloons; the patron inquired how many days labour it had cost. "Twenty-five," replied Cano. "Then it appears," returned the other, "that you count your labour at four doubloons a day, and I who am an auditor—a far nobler profession than yours—I can earn each day barely a doubloon." "Yours a nobler profession than mine!" cried Cano. "Know that the king can make auditors of the dust of the earth, but that God reserves to himself the creation of Alonzo Cano!"

I like that tale about the old artist which relates that he could not die in peace so long as the priest held before him a badly modelled and inartistic crucifix. As soon as it was changed at his request for a simple cross, he made a most edifying end.

Paintings by Alonzo Cano are to be found in many of the galleries of Europe, a wonderfully beautiful *Ecce Homo* is in La Caridad, Seville; of his sculpture, the *Altar at Lebrija*, and the few figures already mentioned in the Cathedral of Granada are said to be all that remain. I have, however, seen a very fine work attributed to him in the Ny Glyptothek, Copenhagen, a collection of sculpture made by that skilful connoisseur Dr. Jacobsen. It represents a *Monk Reading* and is one of the finest examples of Spanish sculpture to be found out of Spain.

Francis Zarcillo (b. 1707) was born at Murcia where he lived and worked. He found numerous patrons in his native city, and, working all his life



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

with unwearied diligence, produced no less than seventeen hundred and ninety-two separate works. His style may be best studied in the *Ermita de Jesus* in Murcia. "In chapels round this church," says Mrs. Main, a sympathetic traveller in Spain, "are deposited the wooden statues which are carried in procession through the streets of the town on great festivals. Those by Zarcillo are extremely fine. He carved them about 1763, and the best of his groups seemed to me to be those of *The Last Supper*, *The Agony in the Garden*, and *The Betrayal*." Baedeker says: "Those who have not seen the groups in the *Ermita de Jesus*, have no complete idea of Spanish sculpture. Groups such as that of *The Agony in the Garden* and *The Kiss of Judas*, may for the moment, through the captivating truth and inwardness of their curious conception, throw all other known representations into the shade, and that in spite of the fact that the Saviour wears an embroidered velvet mantle." One of the Roman soldiers is in mediaeval armour. Cean Bermudez remarks of this artist that "had he lived in times of purer taste and enjoyed greater advantages of instruction, he might have been one of the first sculptors of Spain." I quote thus largely on this subject because I regret to say I have not seen these celebrated sculptures.

"Spanish sculpture after Cano and his school is hardly worth mentioning," says Ford, and this time I most heartily agree with him.

This sketch of the history of Spanish sculpture would be more incomplete than it is, if I omitted to refer to the celebrated Elche bust which was dug up in 1897 and immediately purchased for the Louvre for 4,000 pesetas. Dr. Williamson, the



*Giraudon photo]*

*[The Louvre*

BUST FOUND AT ELCHE, SPAIN



## SPANISH SCULPTURE

eminent art critic, pronounces it of Spanish work, and says: "it is the most beautiful, original, and important piece of sculpture which has ever been unearthed in Spain. It is life-sized, and bears traces of colour, and the chiselling upon it is of very extraordinary quality." He adds that the curious head-dress resembles that still worn by the natives of Elche. The Louvre catalogue calls it Graeco-Phoenician work; however that may be, the bust shows evidence of profound Greek influence, but the expression, the delicacy of the modelling of the nose, and the superb drawing of the mouth, recall the purest period of the Italian Renaissance.

Writing of the so-called "Lady of Elche," the author of a descriptive pamphlet describes it as "Type indigène, modes indigènes, art Espagnol, profondément empreint d'influences orientales et, plus à la surface, d'influences Grecques." In the Campana collection in the Louvre are some gold ear-rings embroidered with pearls, closely resembling the remarkable ear-rings of this bust. It seems to be allied with the famous sculptures, the *Cerro de los Santos* in the Madrid Museum.



## CHAPTER XII

CANOVA, THORVALDSEN, AND GIBSON

THE three celebrated sculptors whose names head this chapter are grouped together naturally, both from the similarity in the circumstances of their lives, and from their devotion to and imitation of classic sculpture. All were the children of parents in poor circumstances, all passed their existence in Rome at nearly the same period; absorbed entirely in their art, none of them married; they attained a ripe age; all, curiously enough, acquired wealth, and on the first two, honours were showered without stint.

Canova, called by Italians with exaggerated emphasis the "Reformer of Art," was the best all-round artist of the three, though he never produced so sublime a work as Thorvaldsen's *Christ* in the Frue Kirke of Copenhagen, nor so naturalistic a one as the same sculptor's *Byron* at Cambridge. Gibson comes last of the triad in the order of genius, but to him, too, were confided important public monuments. Thorvaldsen and Gibson both came to the paradise of sculpture from the bleak North, but Canova was a son of the country which was the scene of his labours. How close was the connection between these famous men may be judged from the fact that Gibson studied for five

## CANOVA

years under Canova, and afterwards under Thorvaldsen. Gibson, too, succeeded Canova in the occupation of the same studio in the Via de' Greci, Rome.

It is difficult for the visitor to Rome who only knows it in its present unpicturesque state to realize what the old city was like in their day. Completely surrounded by walls, and without suburbs, it stood alone on the wide Campagna, into which it was dangerous to penetrate unarmed. The yellow Tiber, spanned by a few bridges, rolled unembanked, and occasionally invaded the streets as far as the Barcaccia in the Piazza di Spagna. On its bank, towards the Porta di S. Paolo, was the Marmorata or wharf, where from time immemorial artists went to select the marble landed there from ships which brought it from Carrara. The Palatine was a mass of formless ruin, amid which goats and cattle grazed, a few monasteries only gave variety to the scene of desolation. The Colosseum was unexcavated, and its massive walls were brilliant with wallflowers and many another wild plant. Around the arena were the Stations of the Cross, at which gaily-dressed contadine or long-robed monks might be seen kneeling in prayer. The Forum was a green field (Campo Vaccino) planted with trees, where, on market days, the peasants gathered to buy and sell. The Baths of Caracalla, where Shelley wrote his "Prometheus Unbound," were huge masses of formless masonry draped with hanging foliage, and gay with wild flowers; amid the ruins yawned black abysses where the sun never penetrated. The Castle of S. Angelo was hemmed in close with houses, as was also the

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

Pantheon. The Mausoleum of Augustus, once an amphitheatre for bull-fights, served as an open-air theatre.

The pomp of the Papal Court was very great, and the Roman princes lived in unbridled luxury. The balls of the Torlonia in Rome, Stendhal writes in 1827, "are, in my opinion, superior to those of the Tuileries." The streets were gay, cardinals in purple robes, followed by servants in garish liveries, took exercise, while their carriages came behind them; even the Holy Father himself might be encountered, as, robed in purest white, he leaned from his gorgeous coach to bless the kneeling crowd. The narrow, tortuous streets were nearly empty of all traffic at an early hour in the evening, and only illuminated at night by a few oil lamps suspended on a rope across them, or placed in front of a picture or image of the Madonna. Occasionally a scuffle might be heard, and a crying-out as some one fell beneath the stroke of the ever-ready knife. A story told by Gibson confirms this: "One night a friend of mine was going to his home along the Corso about midnight, when his attention was arrested by a faint voice. He then saw a man lying full-length in the middle of the street; the man said: 'I am stabbed and cannot move.' He was faint from loss of blood, and was afraid a carriage might drive over him. He begged my friend to drag him to the footpath. My friend instantly took him by the ankles and dragged him to the side, and then walked off as quick as possible. 'But why did you leave him so?' I said. He then explained that had he been seen with the wounded man, and had the poor man expired, he should have been arrested and



## CANOVA

confined a considerable time to be examined: to avoid such annoyance he instantly fled."

When work was over for the day, all the artists in Rome met at the famous Café Greco in the Via Condotti to discuss art over their wine till the deepening shadows told them it was time to seek the safety of their homes.

The thousands of tourists who now crowd Rome were represented in those days by a few English milords with their retinues, some rich and titled foreigners, and a sprinkling of such artists and authors as fortune enabled to get there.

Amid the surroundings I have endeavoured to describe, the three artists led happy and industrious lives, honoured and flattered by emperors and kings, and admired by the rest of the world.

Antonio Canova was born in 1757 at Possagno, a village situated at the foot of the Venetian Alps. He very early showed decided talent for sculpture, and to study his art went to Rome in 1780, "little imagining," as Cicognara says, "that he was destined to attain there to the highest rank, and to establish rules of art, by his example, which would extend their influence to the remotest posterity."

Be this as it may, it is certain that before his death at the age of sixty-five Canova produced statue after statue, group after group, 176 in all, stamped with the seal of the devotee of the antique. His contemporaries united in a chorus of praise of these works; honours were showered upon him, Pius VII created him a Marchese and Count Palatine, medals were coined in his honour, the Roman ladies worshipped him, and men of all classes respected and admired him.



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"After the battle of Waterloo, when the Allies entered Paris, it was Canova who negotiated the return of the statues and pictures, the glory of the land. It was most difficult. The Russian Emperor Alexander would have liked them transplanted to Petersburg. It was only through the English who supported Canova, that he made himself heard: at last he prevailed, and the rescued gods and goddesses returned to their desecrated altars."

The dictum of Cicognara has hardly been verified, and Canova's fame was at its highest during his lifetime. The gods and goddesses in whom his soul delighted had already been sculptured by the Greeks with supreme mastery, and the portrait statues which he produced rival his deities in classical feeling. A very shrewd observer, Mrs. Minto Elliot, writes as truly as wittily of the famous *Statue of the Princess Pauline Buonaparte as Venus Vincitrix* in the Villa Borghese, Rome, "To my mind nothing Canova ever did comes up to this pseudo-antique, classic in its affectation, and natural in its want of truth! Whether the story of the 'stove' is true, I will not take upon myself to say, but we are told that in reply to some remark on the absence of drapery, Pauline answered with perfect *naïveté*, 'I was not cold, there was a stove.'"<sup>1</sup>

Affected in pose, over-smooth in execution—from the artificially-curled hair to the manicured toenails—this statue is an insipid combination of vacuity and vanity.

Canova's *Boxers*, in the Vatican, belong to another style of art, but they too are treated in the usual classical manner. Brutal in subject, they do

<sup>1</sup> "Roman Gossip."

## THORVALDSEN

not take front rank in art, but the actions are just and they are very finely executed.

All visitors to S. Peter's, Rome, know his monument to *Clement XII*, which is as good, if not better than others there. The artist considered the *Mourning Genius* his best work. There is much grandeur, too, in the *Sepulchral Monument* which Canova executed as a memorial to Titian, but which, owing to political events and the death of its principal promoter, now serves as a monument to Canova himself in the Church of the Frari, Venice.

No man, kings and emperors excepted, ever received greater adulation than this most prosperous artist, and when he was buried in the church he had himself erected in his native village, Venice decreed him a public funeral. Far from being spoilt by fame and honour, his nobility of character and goodness of life earned for him the appellation, "il buon Canova." "Anima bell' e pura" were his last words, and they apply well to himself.

Canova is described as "pale, with that fine olive tint of the south, calm, grandly-featured, with lofty forehead, speaking eyes, and abundant locks of blackest hair, parted in the middle *à la merveilleuse*."

Bertel Thorvaldsen was born in Copenhagen in 1770. As he showed great promise when a student, a subscription was raised to enable him to continue his studies in Rome, then the art centre of the world, and the Danish Academy which does so much to assist native talent, awarded him a small pension. He lived in Rome for twenty-three years without returning to his native country;

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

he was accustomed to say that he dated his birth from the first day he saw the Eternal City. Here he worked in the studio which had once been Flaxman's. Canova, then in the zenith of his fame, and the English sculptors, Gibson and Wyatt, were his co-temporaries. Living as these artists did amid the classical statues with which Rome is peopled, many of which were being unearthed day by day from the teeming soil, it was natural that they should draw their inspiration from these immortal works, and believe that to create something which should resemble them, was the highest aim of art. Thorvaldsen was sincere according to his light, but not sufficiently original to escape the tendency of his age; he was led captive when a more powerful genius would have been conqueror. He was accustomed, like Gibson, to insist on the absolute perfection of Greek art and Greek art only, and, it is said, used to walk through the galleries of the Vatican as one lost in reverie.

Gibson thus describes the grand Scandinavian artist: "The old man's person can never be forgotten by those who saw him. Tall and strong, he never lost a tooth in his life—he was most venerable looking, His kind countenance was marked with hard thinking, his eyes were grey, and his white locks lay on his broad shoulders. At great assemblies his breast was covered with orders."

In 1793, Gibson tells us, in the fragment of autobiography which has been edited by Lady Eastlake, Thorvaldsen paid a visit to his native land, and returned to Rome accompanied by a countrywoman of his own, a Baroness von Stampe, who declared she intended to take him back to Copenhagen. For this end she set to work to



## THORVALDSEN

make him uncomfortable in his domestic arrangements, but without success, as he was the most disorderly of men. She then tried to make him too much the reverse by introducing reforms for which he had little relish. One morning Gibson went to pay him a visit, and observed a maid-servant—a new innovation—carpets, order, and cleanliness, Thorvaldsen himself was reformed. In a new green velvet cap, beautifully worked and ornamented, a superb dressing-gown, Turkish slippers, and gold ear-rings, he looked like a grandee of Persia. "Gibson," said he, "I am ill." He then rebelled against his Baroness, threw away the carpets and amazed his visitors by his dirty appearance. However, the Baroness succeeded in the end and carried him back to Copenhagen.

His native city outdid itself in efforts to do honour to its famous son. His arrival was like the home-coming of some victorious general or beloved monarch, processions were organized, flags unfurled, poems written, and wreaths showered on the unappreciative sculptor; never before had an artist received such an ovation, an ovation which did equal credit to the Danish nation and to him who was deemed worthy of it; the government also chartered the vessel which brought his collection of casts to Copenhagen. He died in that city in 1844 at seventy-three years of age.

The Museum of his works, in the midst of which he is buried, is one of the chief attractions of the Danish capital, and was built partly at the expense of the community of Copenhagen. It was commenced during the artist's lifetime, and he bequeathed to it his models, art collections, and the furniture of his house.



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

Whether from his inherited Scandinavian tendencies, or from artistic conviction, Thorvaldsen's work was sometimes more virile than that of the polished Italian Canova, who had assimilated Greek art with the first breath he drew. His classic figures indeed resemble those of Canova, but he knew how to throw servile imitation aside when he chose, and so produced his *Christ*<sup>1</sup> and the statue of *Byron* at Cambridge. The calm of the "white Christ" who, stretching out his arms, seems to express by the action the words written at his feet: "Kommer til Mig" ("Come unto Me"), its simplicity, reverence, and nobility make this figure approach very nearly the divine conception of Leonardo da Vinci in his picture of the *Last Supper* at Milan. Personally I find it the most moving conception of the subject I have ever seen in marble. Thorvaldsen's *Christ* is of course not realistic—it is a divine abstraction. This statue stands in the apse of the Frue Kirke in Copenhagen, along the aisles of which are the same sculptor's twelve *Apostles*; there is also, his fine *Baptismal Angel*. In completeness, in grandeur, in unity of design, no artist has ever executed a monument more honourable to himself and to his country than this of Thorvaldsen's. His *Hebe*, *Venus*, *Mercury*, *Jason*, etc., are of the usual classic type, and may be ranked with works of the same kind by Canova and Gibson, but his *Byron* "looking upwards in search of a thought," is a far better work, because it is both original and naturalistic.

Many of his reliefs are well known. His *Night*,

<sup>1</sup> The original model of this figure is in the Church of Sta Martina, Rome, to which the sculptor bequeathed it.

## THORVALDSEN

a flying angel bending over the sleeping babes which she carries in her arms, is a poetical rendering of a graceful subject. The *Morning*, too, is charming, but has not equal pathos. Looking at these works, the glamour of the old artist's genius subdues us, and we realize that he was not unworthy of the immense fame he succeeded in achieving.

Tenerani, a pupil of Thorvaldsen, attained considerable distinction, and executed the tomb of Pius VIII for St. Peter's. His best work is *The Angel of the Resurrection*, waiting, trumpet in hand, for the signal when the graves shall give up their dead, and stand before the Lord for judgement. His seated statue of Count Rossi is also a noteworthy work. Tenerani died in 1870, and his funeral at night was attended by two hundred artists, the same number of painters and carvers, more than five hundred priests and monks, and thirty carriages of the nobility. Thus Rome did honour to her great artist.

Wilhelm Bissen (b. 1798), a Danish sculptor of great merit, was admitted to the studio of Thorvaldsen, but though he knew the value of that great artist's friendship and advice, he soon preferred to work alone. To this fact it is probably due that his statue of *Gutenberg* at Mainz, his *Frieze* in the Hall of the Knights at Christiansborg (now destroyed by fire), his grand equestrian statue of *Frederick VII*, the bronze statues of *Holberg* and *Oehlenschläger*, all in Copenhagen, and his pathetic *Danske Landsoldat* erected at Fredericia to commemorate a Danish victory in the Slesvig-Holstein war, have escaped classic influence and are inspired by nature herself.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

The life of John Gibson has already been sketched, but a few more particulars may be added. After a little preliminary study in Liverpool he made his way to what he called the true home of the sculptor, Rome, and was admitted to the studio of Canova. There he spent his peaceful happy life. "In my art," he said, "what do I feel? what do I encounter? happiness."

When Sir Francis Chantrey visited Gibson's studio in Rome, he asked the latter how long he had been there. Gibson replied, "three years." Chantrey then observed, "One three years is enough to spoil you or any man." Gibson then asked whether he thought he was in a bad school, to which the other artist made no reply.

Evidently the shrewd old sculptor foresaw that Gibson would become what he did, a professed imitator of the antique. "There is but one road," Gibson writes, "to arrive at a lofty degree in sculpture, there is but one road to it, and this was travelled by the Greeks. All those men of genius who have deviated from the principles of Greek art, have left us works not superior, but inferior to the ancients."

"Who of that day," said one who knew him, "does not recall the pale contemplative face of the great pupil of Canova, his tightly compressed lips and regular features? His manner, aristocratic in its philosophic self-respect, those far-seeing grey eyes, and the little action of the hand as he demonstrated his favourite topic, colour in marble."

Knowing that the Greeks coloured their statues, he made attempts, much ridiculed at the time, to re-introduce the practice, saying, "whatever the Greeks did was right." He thought the *Tinted*



## GIBSON

*Venus* his most ideal and highly-finished work and would sit for hours in the twilight in contemplation of her. "I cannot screw up my courage," he remarked, "to send away my goddess." The irreverent called the statue "Mrs. Gibson." His best work is, however, as before remarked, *A Hunter and Dog*; if none of his works survived except that alone, his fame would not deteriorate.

Gibson was a singularly absent-minded man, and his pupil Miss Hosmer's definition of him is very apt. "He is a god in his studio, but God help him when he is out of it."

Harriet Hosmer was an American, and her principal work was a marble recumbent figure of *Beatrice Cenci*, which, however, strongly recalls the beautiful *Santa Cecilia* of Stefano Maderno in the Church of Sta Cecilia in Trastevere.

Mention should also be made in this connection of the works at this period of Giovanni Duprè (1817-1882) the Siennese. They mark a return to naturalism from the conventionality and exaggerations of Bernini and the classicism of Canova. His modelling of the figure is always accurate and full of feeling. The pathetic figure of the *Dead Abel* is a finished study of the nude; the *Cain* is not so successful. His masterpiece is a *Pietà* in the Cemetery of the Misericordia at Siena. The grouping is admirable, the figure of the dead Christ magnificent in modelling and proportion, and the whole inspired with profound religious sentiment.



## CHAPTER XIII

### SCULPTURE IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

No judgment of art is possible to any person who does not love it.—RUSKIN.

THIS fine collection of sculpture is studied under somewhat unfortunate conditions, not the least among which are a dark, cold, unsympathetic atmosphere, and the dirt caused by fog and smoke.

The marble sun-imbued,  
Which holds the thought of some immortal Greek,

is in Italy and especially in Greece, of a warm yellow tone like wax, transparent, and having rich reflections; in northern lands, cold and gray, it scarcely seems the same kind of stone. In this connection it may be mentioned that marble is unadapted to outside work in England, the fog and damp of the climate soon blacken it, and the effect intended by the artist is destroyed.

A bright and sunny day should if possible be chosen for a visit to these galleries, and I propose only to mention such works as seem to me the finest, and so save the hasty visitor the time and trouble of inspecting those of less merit.

Turning to the left after passing the entrance door we come immediately to the

## IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

### ROMAN GALLERY

The Romans excelled in portrait sculpture, and some of the busts here are among the finest specimens extant. All bear the stamp of being good likenesses, the features are well modelled, the characters strongly marked, and the expressions excellent. It is to be regretted that these fine works are shown in a light exactly opposite to them, the delicacy of the modelling is thus partly lost. All have great historical interest, but artistically speaking *Caracalla* (1917), *Pertinax* (1916), *Antoninus Pius* (1901), and *Julius Caesar* (1870), seem to me the best. The bony head of this last is extremely well rendered. Two fine statues also adorn this gallery, that of *Hadrian* (1381), and of a *Priestess* (1988), the broad thick drapery of the male figure forms a decided contrast to the tiny folds of the finer material worn by the female, which it is useful to study. The restored noses of *Hadrian* and of *Julia Sabina* must of course be conjectural in form, but they seem very well done. "Upon the pedestal of each statue, or bust, are inscribed, when known, the name of the person represented, the dates of such persons, birth, death, and (if an Emperor) of his reign, and the site where the sculpture was discovered."

### FIRST GRAECO-ROMAN ROOM

It is important to note the remarks made in the Museum Guide book. "This and the two succeeding rooms are appropriated to Statues, Busts, and Reliefs, for the most part of the mixed class termed Graeco-Roman, consisting of works discovered elsewhere than in Greece, but of which the style

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and subject have been derived, either directly or indirectly, from the Greek schools of sculpture. Some few of these may, perhaps, be original Greek works, but the majority were certainly executed in Italy during the Imperial times, though generally by Greek artists, and in many instances from earlier Greek models."

The most important statue in this room is the *Satyr Dancing* (1655), known also as the *Rondinini Faun*. The torso and right thigh only are antique, but how perfect they are! Notice the tension of the muscles, the slimness of the proportions, the wiriness of the form. Surely this gay and slender youth must have danced from his childhood up and loved the exercise. The restored portions seem a little heavier than the original fragment warranted.

*Venus preparing for the Bath* (1578) is one of those ugly inane copies of a favourite subject of the Greeks met with in most Continental galleries. Why preparing for the bath? Her attitude is rather reminiscent of a bather taken by surprise, or of a model posing for admiration. The figure is heavy, and the action affected.

*The Apollo Citharoedus* (1360) is a powerful but somewhat inelegant figure.

The bust of *Homer* (1825) is one of the best of the many representations of the poet. The blind, aged, and travel-worn bard is here exactly realized, but the head is less intellectual than would have been expected.

### SECOND GRAECO-ROMAN ROOM

The *Townley Venus* (1574), found at Ostia, is a youthful and charming presentment of the goddess.



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Not yet fully developed, the figure gives more than promise of future beauty; the falling drapery is well treated, the face lovely, and the action graceful. Broad and simple in treatment, this statue is a charming representation of youthful beauty and innocence.

The *Discobolos* (athlete hurling the discus) (250) is a Graeco-Roman copy of the bronze made by Myron in the first half of the fifth century B.C. The head, which is antique but of a different style, has been incorrectly added, the true position and correct type of head are shown in another copy of this statue now in the Lancilotti Palace, Rome.

Lucian, in an argument about another statue, explains the action of this. "Surely," he says, "you do not mean the quoit-thrower, who stoops in the attitude of one who is making his cast, turning round towards the hand that holds the quoit, and bending the other knee gently beneath him, like one who will rise erect as he hurls the quoit? No, said he, for that quoit-thrower is one of the works of Myron."

The *Laughing Satyr* (1647) is an epitome of mirth, and expresses well the *joie de vivre* which seems to have been the heritage of the Greek nation.

### THIRD GRAECO-ROMAN ROOM

The *Westmacott Athlete* (1754), so called from the name of its former owner, is the graceful figure of a youth not yet arrived at maturity. We are told that it is to be "especially admired for the beautiful line of his back and shoulders when seen from behind," but, alas! this is impossible in its present



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position. How much it is to be regretted that one cannot walk round all these figures and thus study them more thoroughly!

Here, as so often, a lesson in sculpture is afforded, by comparing the two busts next to each other, *Aphrodite*, formerly known as Dione (1596), and an *Amazon* (503). The softness of modelling and tender treatment of the former work contrast very favourably with the hard outlines, especially of the eyes, and coarseness of the latter work.

The heroic *Head of a Youth* (1755), found at Ostia and restored by Flaxman, is one of the finest representations of youth and beauty left to us by antique sculptors. Nobility of form, intensity of expression, and pure style of modelling, lend this bust the very highest interest and excite the greatest admiration.

Here we have another *Discobolos* (1753), of which only the torso, however, is antique. The action is that which precedes the movement of Myron's figure of the same subject. The statue has been ascribed to Alcamenes.

The beautiful and well-known bust called *Clytie* (1874) is most certainly a portrait, probably of Antonia, the daughter of Marcus Antonius, for lovely as the face is, it is not divine, or of the type given by the Greeks to their divinities. The modelling of the hair is especially exquisite and reproduces nature exactly.

A *Maenad in frenzy* (2194), a small relief, strikes me as being a perfect little work. She is seizing the hind legs of a goat in one hand and appears to be about to whirl the animal round with her in her frantic dance in worship of Dionysos. The drapery which floats round her as she moves is so marvel-

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lously executed that you imagine you see it moving and twisting about the young and lissome form.

At the end of this room stands the fine statue of *Mercury* (1599) from the Farnese Palace, which is perhaps the best work in the museum next to the Elgin marbles. The head is particularly beautiful. The Guide Book says the statue "is copied from an original which must have been famous in antiquity as it is repeated in several copies." Be this as it may, it is certainly a very noble and impressive work.

The relief, the *Apotheosis of Homer* (2191), is more interesting and curious than artistically beautiful. The scene represents the summit of Parnassus where Zeus is represented, and below him, in various characteristic attitudes, are Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses, and the Muses themselves. Beneath them Homer is seated on a throne, and beside him kneel figures representing the Iliad and the Odyssey, while Time and the World crown the poet, and Myth, History, Tragedy, Comedy, Nature, Virtue, Memory, Good Faith, and Wisdom, unite to do him homage.

### ROOM OF ARCHAIC GREEK SCULPTURE

The sculpture in this room belongs for the most part to the sixth century B.C.

Though all the work here is archaic, some of it is greatly in advance of the rest. The two sitting figures from the *Sacred Way* (9-11), produced 580 or 520 years B.C., are scarcely more than unformed masses of stone. The artist seems to have struggled with his material without sufficient means or knowledge. From these rough figures, scarcely

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recognizable as human, to certain reliefs from the Temple of Selinus, as great an advance is shown as from the latter to the frieze of the Parthenon.

On the sides of the room are casts from the east and west pediments of a temple in the island of Aegina (175-183), the originals of which are at Munich. They are assigned to the beginning of the fifth century B.C., and are not reliefs but little figures in the round, isolated from each other without regard to composition. They are later works, however, than the four celebrated metopes from two of the temples at Selinus in Sicily, which are on the east wall.

Rude as these are in execution they are not wanting in a certain vigour of conception, and the power of telling a story. No. 135 is almost ludicrous. Hercules is represented carrying off the Kerkropes, robbers who haunted the neighbourhood of Epheusus. It is said that while he was carrying them off they began telling each other how their mother had warned them that if they continued in their evil courses some dreadful fate would befall them, which so amused the hero that he set them at liberty. Hercules has a robber in each hand, hanging straight down, and each robber has three ringlets on each side of his head which also hang straight down.

The best metopes from Selinus are in the museum at Palermo.

The *Harpy Tomb* brought from Xanthus in Lycia, though not artistically beautiful, is of great interest as perhaps indicating belief in the immortality of the soul. The winged figures or harpies appear to represent the angels of death, who bear away in their arms the souls of the departed,



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represented as tiny human figures. Other authorities, however, declare that the harpies are carrying off the daughters of Pandareus on the day after their wedding, to be the slaves of the Furies.

A cast of the bronze *Charioteer*, discovered by the French during their excavations at Delphi, is far and away the most advanced work in this room. The figure is perfect except for the left arm which is broken off above the elbow, the right is extended in the act of guiding the horses, the long Ionic *chiton* falls in straight simple lines to the feet. The original, which I saw at Delphi shortly after it was discovered, is remarkable for the beautiful green iridescent colour of the bronze and the curious effect produced by the enamelling of the eyes, all of which is of course lost in the cast.

Having finished our inspection of the Archaic Room, and before entering that which contains the crowning glories of Greek sculpture, it would be well to pause and consider why an art which commenced as we have just seen should have had so widely different a development from that which followed its renaissance under the Pisani and others in Italy. The first works are not totally dissimilar, the best of the metopes from Selinus resemble in the vigour of their execution, shortness of the figures, exaggerated size of the heads, and rough modelling of the extremities, the reliefs on the façade of the Duomo at Orvieto. But immediately there is a divergence, then a complete change of style. The Greek, occupied solely with the human form which he had deified, improved in his representation of it from generation to generation till he reached perfection; the Italian, falling under



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the powerful influence of the Church, sought rather to portray the stirring episodes of his religious faith in the manner that Church demanded, and to this his study of nature was subordinate. And the nearer the Italian approached the Greek, so much the more spiritless and faithless was his work. This is evident if we but look at the Christ of Michelangelo in the Church of Sta Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, a figure which might very well have been called a Mercury or an Athlete, and could stir the imagination of no one but an artist, who would admire it for its superb technical qualities. In the works of Pheidias and Praxiteles, Greek sculpture reached its highest point, in those of Michelangelo and Donatello the Renaissance, and the difference between the styles of those artists lies in worship of deified humanity by the first, and obedience to the traditions of the Church by the latter.

### ANTE-ROOM

Here is a seated statue of *Demeter* (1300) found at Cnidos, in Asia Minor. So majestic, so noble, is this figure, that critics have declared it may perhaps be the work of Praxiteles himself. Professor Brunn, standing before it, exclaimed: "At last I have found what I have been looking for all over Europe, the pure Greek conception of the goddess Demeter as embodied in sculpture. Up to this time I have only seen Roman translations of the original type."

The pose of the figure is most dignified, the long lines of drapery on each side of the head adding greatly to the effect. The folds over the left shoulder contradict the turn of the head and

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help the action, the small ones crossing the thighs  
foreshorten the legs.

The sculptor sure  
Was a strong spirit, and the hue  
Of his own mind did there endure  
After the touch whose power had braided  
Such grace.—SHELLEY.

### EPHESUS ROOM

At a first glance this room seems full of masses of marble, "without form and void." On further examination, however, the visitor stands amazed before the magnificent sculptured figures on the drum of a column (1206) from the *Temple of Artemis* at Ephesus, reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world, and which was visited by St. Paul. The use of the sculptured drums was suggested by an earlier archaic temple. The four figures before us probably represent Death and Mercury conducting Alcestis from Hades. Alcestis, wife of Admetos, consented to die in place of her husband, but Hercules overcame Death, and Alcestis was restored to life. They are much mutilated, but critics are not wanting who assert them to be the genuine work of Scopas, who, history asserts, made some of the columns: "The expression of pathos in the mouth of the winged figure, the upturned eye of Hermes with its slightly-contracted eyebrow, and the strong resemblance they all bear to the heads from Tegea by the same master, make the conjecture almost a certainty."<sup>1</sup>

Among the contents of this room is a remark-

<sup>1</sup> Wherry, "Greek Sculpture."

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able *Sculptured Capital* with projecting bulls' heads found at Salamis, in Cyprus. The *Head of Alexander* looks like a portrait, but is not so fine in feature and expression as a bust with the same name in the Capitol, Rome.

### ELGIN ROOM

The sculptures of the Parthenon are to Greek what the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is to Renaissance art—its supreme achievement.

When, by successive victories, the Greeks succeeded in repelling the Persian invasion, the Athenians became the head of the confederated states, and decided to adorn their city with buildings and sculptures. The finest of these was the Parthenon, or Temple of the virgin goddess Athene, the most perfect example of a Peripteral Octastyle Doric temple, that is, entirely surrounded by a colonnade, and having a double row of eight columns at each end. The architect was Ictinos, but the whole of the sculptural decorations were confided to the greatest sculptor of that or any other age, Pheidias.

"As the building rose," Plutarch tells us, "stately in size and unsurpassed in form and grace, the workmen vied with each other that the quality of their work might be enhanced by its artistic beauty. Most wonderful of all was the rapidity of construction. Pheidias managed everything, and was the overseer in everything."

Defaced by time, injured by wanton mutilation, dilapidated by warfare and an explosion of gunpowder, and damaged by the various religious bodies which in turn took possession of the grand



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old pagan shrine, these works of the great Greek sculptor remain the most perfect examples of the art the world contains. In praise of Pheidias the voices of the past and present are unanimous. "The sculptures of the Parthenon," the official guide informs us, "are accounted, by the consent of artists and critics, to be the finest series in the world. In the art of Pheidias complete technical mastery has been acquired, and sculpture is freed from its archaic fetters, while it is still pervaded by a certain grave dignity and simplicity which is wanting in the works of a later time."

The group of figures on the Eastern Pediment represented the birth of Athene. Of these there remain to us, in a very mutilated condition, a male figure reclining, popularly called *Theseus*, two goddesses, *Demeter* and *Persephone*, sitting on low seats, a figure in rapid motion (perhaps *Iris*), a torso of *Victory*, a most beautiful group of one recumbent and two seated female figures called the *Three Fates*, and a fine *Head of a Horse*.

The Western Pediment represented the contest of Athene and Poseidon for the soil of Attica; some of the statues still remain on the temple in Athens, but we have casts of them here. The *Ilissos* is comparable to the *Theseus* only in magnificence of attitude and nobility of design. These two male figures, the best preserved fragments, seem indeed imbued with divinity.

The finest of the female figures are the *Demeter* and *Persephone*, and they are so because of the dignity and nobility which inspires them, because of the divinity with which they are inspired, the exaltation of their conception. And the mechanical execution is commensurate with all these. Head-



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less, handless, footless, hurled to earth from their mighty pediments, brought from their sunny land to the sullen atmosphere of England, these mighty fragments still reign, yes, reign and dominate, and will, so long as a single portion of them shall exist. England has given the mighty exiles an honoured home, as she has done to many another.

By good fortune a clever artist named Jacques Carrey made sketches of the pediments in 1674—before they were injured by the explosion of gunpowder. These drawings are now in Paris, but facsimiles of them are hung in this room, and may be studied with advantage. An excellent model of the Parthenon also shows the exact position of all the sculptures.

The metopes, of which the Museum possesses fifteen in marble and five in plaster casts, seem to me to require less attention. In all there were originally ninety-two, and are probably the work of sculptors under the direction of Pheidias. Their subject is the combat of the Lapiths with the Centaurs, and the Greeks with the Amazons, favourite subjects of the ancients. They seem too high in relief for pure art in their present position; on the outer wall of the temple for which they were intended, the effect would no doubt be accurate.

The *Frieze of the Parthenon*, probably the last portion of the sculpture completed and the work of Pheidias himself, is the masterpiece of that artist. The subject is the Panathenaic procession which was held every year to celebrate the birthday of Athene and present her with a new *peplos* or robe. The frieze ran round the outer wall of the *cella*; its total length was five hundred and

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twenty-two feet, and of this, between marbles and casts, the British Museum possesses four-fifths.

On panels IV-VI the deities of Olympus are represented seated, and a priest receives from a boy the new robe. Towards these the procession, consisting of Canephori, maidens bearing offerings, victims for the sacrifice, youths, musicians, magistrates and horsemen, moves. The cavalcade of horsemen is considered the finest portion of this immortal work.

The noble and graceful personages who form the procession seem to pass before the spectator with a slow rhythmic motion. All proceed with the calmness of conscious strength, the dignity of a lofty purpose. There is no hurrying, no crowding, all is calm, restrained, and inspired with the spirit of beauty. The females are lovely, the youths are handsome, the old men wise. There is no striving after mere effect, no under-cuttings, no limbs modelled in the round; the chisel of the sculptor never faltered, the mind of the artist never wavered. He knew what he wished to do, and knew also that he had the power to carry out his inspiration. Hence a feeling of perfect satisfaction and enjoyment is communicated from him to the spectator who stands before this supreme production of art.

The excellence of the work consists in nobility of design, perfect mastery of the difficult art of relief, exact proportion and exalted type of the personages represented who seem a race of heroes, consummate style, profound knowledge of anatomy and movement, simplicity of treatment, and complete control of the material employed. The horses are grandly modelled, their action free and true,

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while the seat of the riders is worthy of an Arab. All this has been better said thousands of times before, but if I succeed in attracting the reader's intelligent observation to these great works, my purpose in repeating these phrases will be attained.

"By carefully observing them," says Flaxman, in his old-fashioned manner, "the student will accustom himself to a noble habit of thinking, and consequently choose whatever is beautiful, elegant, and grand, rejecting all that is mean and vulgar; by thus imbibing an electric spark of the poetic fire, he will learn to choose fit subjects for the employment of his talents, and to convert the beauty and grace of ancient poetry and genius to the service of the morals and institutions of our own time and country."

The complete justification of Lord Elgin in removing the marbles from Athens is found in a comparison of the casts of portions of the frieze which he had made in 1801, with those made in 1872. In the former are much more sharpness and detail; in panel XII the whole of a youth's face has been destroyed in the interval, and they are much more damaged by vicious treatment and the action of time and weather.

A noble bust of Pericles, made in Roman times from a Greek original, fitly stands among works executed during his enlightened rule.

The *Caryatid* (407) brought from the Erechtheum, strong, erect, and simple, is a perfect example of architectural sculpture. If the visitor will look at her in a side view, he will notice the straight lines of drapery at the back which give such strength and repose to the figure that she



ATTRIBUTED TO PHEIDIAS



[National Museum, Athens]

DESIGN FOR THE MINERVA OF THE PARTHENON





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does not appear to feel fatigue under her superincumbent burden, but to be capable of supporting it to eternity. I can better express my feeling with regard to this figure in a sonnet.

### TO THE CARYATID IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Pale pris'ner ravished from thine own fair shore  
Perchance to perish in our northern gloom,  
Dost thou in silence mourn the heavy doom  
That from thy sister Caryatid's tore  
Leaving thee scared and lonely evermore,  
In thy mute beauty, thine eternal peace  
Witnessing to the "glory that was Greece,"  
And genius of the hero race she bore?  
In thy distress thou still art eloquent  
Of arms, of art, of song; thy war-stained frame,  
Thy time-worn marble are a monument  
Which cannot lie, to her immortal name;  
Sad Caryatid, lone, and worn, and spent,  
Point for us too the glorious path of fame.

I find myself quite unable to realize that the cast of the Varvakeion Athenè, which stands in this room, gives any adequate representation of the great statue of the goddess by Pheidias which stood in the *cella* of the Parthenon, and which was described by Pausanias. The huge shield destroys one side view, the pillar which supports the right hand is an awkward contrivance, the figure is too short and the modelling archaic, faults impossible to the sculptor of the immortal Frieze.

### PHIGALEIAN ROOM

That the *Frieze* (532-139) *from the Temple of Apollo Epicurios* (the Helper) near Phigaleia in Arcadia is not equal to that we have just been studying, is little in its disfavour. The east and

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south panels represent combats of Greeks and Amazons, the west and north have for their subject the contest between the Centaurs and Lapiths. Though the execution of these works is somewhat coarse, and the relief high, the action of the figures throughout is wonderfully vigorous. The imagination of the sculptor was in advance of his powers of execution.

The following passage from the book of a recent writer on sculpture, gives a correct impression of this work. "It is interesting to contrast the inequality of the work on this frieze, the want of proportion in the figures, and above all, the restless motion which pervades the whole composition, with the perfect harmony that prevails on the Parthenon. There every individual person, every group, is moving on, but it is with the calm, even motion of waves rolling in one after another on a level shore. In the Phigaleian frieze it is as if a heavy gale were blowing; the drapery is wind-tossed, the horses are unmanageable, all is confusion; there is neither dignity nor repose. It is true that the subject of the Parthenon is a peaceful procession, and that of Phigaleia a series of battle scenes; but the metopes of the Parthenon, which contain the same subject, serve equally to show the different spirit of the Attic sculpture and of the society in which he lived and worked."<sup>1</sup>

The student who can fully appreciate this illuminating criticism is not far from understanding sculpture.

There are a few *stelae* or tombstones in this room which serve to give a good idea of those in

<sup>1</sup> Wherry, "Greek Sculpture."



[Athens

FUNERAL MONUMENT





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the wonderful collection of similar works in the Museum at Athens; they possess the same pathos, the same sense of beauty, the same feeling of domesticity. On the tomb of Agathemeris and Sempronius Niketes (630), the husband and wife are represented as about to set out on a journey—their last sad journey to the underworld. The two monuments to youths (625-626) are pervaded with a sentiment of lassitude and resignation which is not without pathos. On another tombstone (619) is a woman receiving a jewel casket from an attendant, we may suppose she is attiring herself for her departure. On a still finer one (620) an attendant is putting on her mistress's sandals, while she touches the servant's head with a gesture of infinite tenderness; another attendant stands behind holding a box which perhaps contains the lady's most cherished trinkets.

Four marble slabs and the cast of a fifth are from the *Temple of the Wingless Victory* on the Acropolis.

### MAUSOLEUM ROOM

On the death of Mausolus, Prince of Caria, in 351 B.C. his wife Artemisia raised a monument to him which exceeded in magnificence any other erection of the kind.

It was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and the name Mausoleum afterwards applied to all similar monuments.

The very site was lost, till, in the sixteenth century, the Knight de la Tourenne and his friend d'Aliscamp searching for material to make lime for the castle of Budrum, built by the Knights of

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St. John, came upon a flight of marble steps, which led to an apartment decorated with sculptures, and thence to an inner chamber containing a sarcophagus. Before they had time to complete their examination, robbers in search of treasure rifled it of its contents.

In 1857 Sir Charles Newton made an exhaustive exploration of the site, and rescued the fragments of sculpture now in this room.

On leaving the Phigaleian room and descending a few steps, we enter a small gallery containing colossal busts, two of which must not be passed unnoticed. These are the magnificent *Barbarian* (1770) from the Forum of Trajan, and the *Hercules* (1736) found in the lava at the foot of Vesuvius. The last with its curiously treated, tightly curling hair is a complete presentment of physical strength and is attributed to Myron.

The *Barbarian* on the contrary, though full of power, appears to suggest the hero's suffering and patience, which gives it very high rank indeed among antique busts.

Again descending, we enter the Mausoleum room, and are at once attracted to the friezes on the wall which are such as none but Greeks could have produced, and which the British Museum is fortunate in possessing. Infinitely superior to the Phigaleian, they hold in artistic merit a middle place between them and the glorious *Frieze of the Parthenon*. The action of the figures is supremely good, the relief is perhaps too high, some of the limbs being sculptured in the round, the type represented, especially of the heads, is very noble. A draped and long-haired charioteer, placed low down on the wall that he may be better seen, is,

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from the extreme beauty of his features, thought to be the work of Scopas.

The colossal *Statues of Mausolos* (1000) and of *Artemisia* (1001) are most impressive. *Mausolos* himself is the better preserved, his figure is broadly treated and is distinguished by dignity and repose. The statue called *Artemisia*, but which may be a goddess acting as charioteer, is remarkable for the perfect arrangement of the voluminous drapery which resembles a Roman toga; unfortunately her face is completely shattered. *Mausolos* with his long hair and broad face is sublime in his barbarity, *Artemisia* more graceful but scarcely less imposing. The best view of this impressive group is from the top of the steps leading into the Nereid room. Seen from there against the gray background, some idea may be formed of the effect produced in their original position on the top of the monument. In the case of the Mausoleum and all other sculptural remains in the Museum, the visitor will be much helped if he examine the various plans and restorations exhibited with them.

The two *Lycian Tombs* (950-1) which stand at the end of this room have good reliefs on their roofs and sides. The history of these monuments is obscure, but it is interesting to observe that in them the construction of earlier timber-built tombs is imitated by reproducing in stone the ends of cross-beams.

### NEREID ROOM

The *Nereid Tomb* found at Xanthos was built by Pericles, a Satrap of Lycia, about 370 B.C.

The frieze (909-912) here, though good in parts, is inferior in composition to any we have hitherto



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discussed, and shows traces of Oriental influence on the minds of the Greek artists who executed it. The graceful intercolumnar figures are in violent action and appear to be dancing. The official guide book suggests that they may be intended to represent sea-breezes as under their feet are marine creatures, probably to indicate the sea over which they are moving. So good is the execution and design of the drapery of these maidens, that they may perhaps claim some affinity with the glorious *Victory* of Samothrace in the Louvre.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a small but unique collection of sculpture in the Soane Museum, more interesting, however, to antiquarians than to artists.

The number of artistic treasures which exist in private collections in England is not universally realized. Acquired by noblemen and other wealthy persons when it was the custom for such as could afford it to make the "grand tour," and when masterpieces of art might be bought on the Continent perhaps for a hundredth part of the sum they now fetch, they still enrich the galleries and adorn the homes of the descendants of these far-sighted connoisseurs. Permission to view them may easily be obtained by any accredited student.

Foremost among these treasure-houses of art are Chatsworth, Lansdowne House, Brocklesby Park, Wilton House, and Petworth; more recent collections have also been formed.

At the Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition held in 1904 the Duke of Devonshire exhibited a magnificent bronze *Head of Apollo* in excellent preservation, pronounced by critics to belong to

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the period between the Olympian sculptures and those of the Parthenon; and a fine *Head of Hermes* apparently the production of the Attic School of the fifth century. Mr. E. P. Warren sent a *Statuette of Hercules* supposed to be the work, or the replica of a work, of Myron. An important fragment from the frieze of the Parthenon discovered in Colne Park, Essex, was shown by Mr. J. C. Bothwell.

From Petworth came a *Head of Aphrodite*, recognized by Professor Furtwängler as an original by Praxiteles, of supreme beauty and perfect finish. A *Head of an Old Man* belonging to Sir J. C. Robinson, an antique replica of a famous portrait of the third century; Mr. Claude Ponsonby's *Idealized Female Portrait*, worthy to be ranked with the splendid examples of the skill of the ancient masters in that branch of art in the British Museum; Mr. Pierpont Morgan's bronze *Statuette of the Winged Eros*, absolutely true in the rendering of a difficult momentary action; the Earl of Wemyss' fine *Head of Dionysos*; the Marquis of Lansdowne's relief *Athenè holding a Helmet*, called by Michaelis "an excellent piece of the noblest style"; the same owner's *Head with part of a Sepulchral Stele*, notable for the distinction of the modelling;

Some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists.—TENNYSON.

and a *Head of a Goddess*, an Attic original of about 460-450 B.C., belonging to Mr. Humphry Ward, adorned this most notable exhibition, and proved how important are the accumulated art-treasures of the country which it was far from exhausting.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

This short list of Greek sculptures shown at the Burlington Club's Exhibition would be greatly extended if every important work were noticed; however, I think I have remarked on enough to answer my present purpose, which is simply to guide the taste of those interested in the art, and to create, if possible, a like emotion in those in whom it does not yet exist. Whoever has real intuitive feeling for sculpture will recognize a good or bad work without knowing why—I have tried to give such a one a reason for the faith that is in him; while he who does not yet care for the divine art may perhaps be led by my little book to inquire into the motives for enthusiasm, and add yet another delightful interest to their lives.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS OF SCULPTURE

EGYPTIAN. Largeness, simplicity, want of detail.

GREEK. Perfection of form, composition and execution.

GRAECO-ROMAN. Virility, coarseness of execution.

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. Depth of sentiment, realism, and force of imagination.

BRITISH. Sincerity, want of artistic perception.

FRENCH. Floridness, vitality, fertility of imagination, cleverness of execution.

GERMAN. Stolidity, precision, sincerity of purpose, hardness of execution.

SPANISH. Good in expression, dominated by ecclesiasticism it is undeveloped and always religious in subject.

THE MODERN ITALIAN SCHOOL, though it has produced some striking works, is characterized by a commercial spirit, and a degradation of the material employed.





## ADDENDUM

WHILE the foregoing pages were passing through the press, a new influence in art has assumed some importance as evidenced by exhibitions at the Grafton and Chenil Galleries and by the violent propaganda of Signor Marinetti—that of the Post-Impressionists and Futurists.

That some active reform is imperative, especially in the art of sculpture, the tenor of this book will have already made abundantly evident, and as is also proved by the remarkable energy of the present reaction. The rebellion of the French against a corrupt monarchy led to the imbecile worship of the goddess of reason, yet France has since settled down into a reasonable republic; so the Post-Impressionist's and Futurist's revolt against the chocolate box inanities of the mid-Victorian epoch, which results in works produced in such a manner as to suggest the avoidance of the time and study indispensable to the production of great art, may in time lead to a less insane method of artistic creation.

A critic, writing on one of the exhibitions of this school, the Salon d'Automne, trenchantly remarks: "The great majority of the works showed on the part of the exhibitors a total lack of the knowledge and ability necessary to the production of a work of art. The knowledge they apparently

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

possess is that any attempt on their part to produce a genuine work of art would only result in lamentable failure, and so in their ridiculous striving for notoriety they adopt a senseless eccentricity of subject and treatment. The exhibits displayed absolute ignorance of the laws of linear and aerial perspective, inability to draw correctly, and colouring that a right-minded child would be ashamed to show in his penny painting book. And we are told this is 'The Art of the Future!'"

Truth is not always ugliness, and ugliness does not need perpetuation. Beauty is what we need, in life, in thought, in art. There is little profit in looking at a canvas and trying to guess whether the blotches on it are meant to represent houses, or cows, or trees. Conversely, Pre-Raphaelitism is dead, but a Velazquez is still worth a king's ransom, and for its possession nations contend.

Our little systems have their day  
They have their day and cease to be

but the firm foundations of art as laid by the Greeks nearly two thousand years ago remain unshaken against the attacks of Pre-Raphaelites, Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Futurists, *et hoc genus omne*. The banalities of the Victorian era have already passed into the limbo of obscurity, so also will pass the crude productions of these schools when the present craze has departed, for let us be thankful there is no such thing as fashion in art truly so called.

Probably artists quietly at work in their studios, unknown, but trying to realize their conceptions and work out their ideals patiently, sincerely, and industriously, are doing better service for art than

## ADDENDUM

those iconoclasts who hastily fling a few colours on canvas and shriek to you to admire their system, or who cut a head and a few limbs roughly out of a block of marble and hurl defiance at the Greeks. Great is the responsibility of those who would form the taste of the public.

Sincerity, one of the first desiderata in art, these young revolutionists no doubt possess, but they must reflect that to destroy is easier than to create, to spout fiery anathemas than to produce good work. And their own inchoate creations from which beauty, science and poetry are utterly absent, will never take the place of the works of the great masters which have stood the test of the ages, and are founded on studies their very principles disclaim. The lovers of true art may possess their souls in patience; like the revolt of the Pre-Raphaelites which rendered much service in its day, their craze too will perish like a plant without a root, leaving, let us hope, some little seed of good behind.

It is certain that art is not one but manifold; yet underlying all true art is the principle that it must give pleasure, a fact these new schools entirely ignore.

All honour, however, to these enthusiastic reformers for proving that in this twentieth century art is still a living force, even though the goal already reached is far from our struggling feet. But by its own violence their movement must ultimately fail, and the great masters of art standing supreme on their eternal heights, will be once more vindicated and reign.

Let me conclude with Mrs. Humphry Ward's pregnant words: "Range the whole world—see



## HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCULPTURE

everything, learn everything—till at the end of years and years you may perhaps be found worthy to be called an artist! But let art have her ends, all the while shining beyond the means she is toiling through—her ends of beauty or of power.”

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